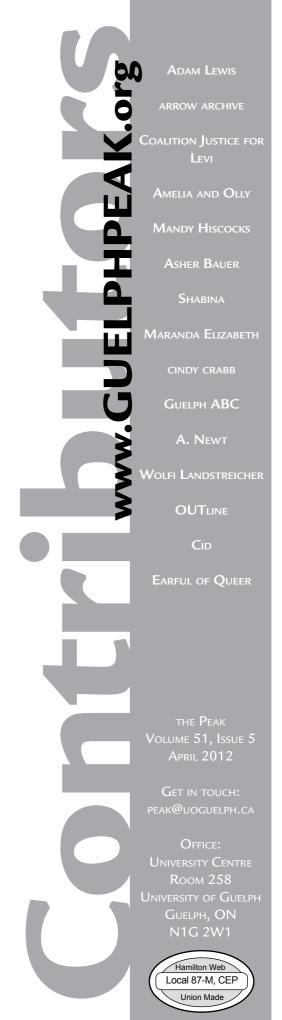


re all will need support at some point in out lives, be it emotional, physical, intellectual, or otherwise.

Asking for support can be just as complex as trying to give it. Trying to find support can be difficult, especially if you don't know what kind of support you need and not finding this support is can be just as crushing as the problem that support being sought. The systems of control, domination and exploitation that we live in make it difficult to have good mental health, and these same systems can endanger our physical safety. As radicals, we need to be constantly refining our definitions of wellness and care-- moving towards a model of support for our communities that does not echo the paternalism of traditional social services, but actually empowers and strengthens those receiving support. So, making asking and finding support easy and accessible is important work for us as members of community to do, that community being as large as a whole city or as small as two best friends.

In this issue we have a few articles looking at different kinds of support. In "How to Be a Good Friend to Crazyfolk" (pg. 40), Maranda Elizabeth shares tips for folks who want to understand and support "crazy people" like her. The Guelph Anarchist Black Cross updates us on the folks facing charges from the G20 (pg. 12), these folks need a different kind of support that can be sent in a letter to their jail cells or to their homes where they face house arrest. Shabina tells us about two really supportive herbs (pg. 35) found growing in the wild that can help out our bodies when they need support.

Support can be difficult and hard to find, but it can also be beautiful and empowering.



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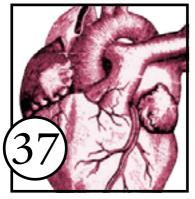
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By: Coalition Justice for Levi

Coalition Justice for Levi and the Schaeffer family are delighted to announce and to celebrate a landmark decision by Ontario's highest court released Tuesday, November 15th. In the decision, the three party panel ruled unanimously that police involved in an SIU (Special Investigations Unit) investigation are not permitted "to have lawyers vet their notes or to assist them in preparation of their notes." The Schaeffer family, along with the family of Douglas Minty launched an application in Ontario's courts in November of 2009. They asked the courts to determine whether the OPP conduct of lawyer vetting of police notes by officers prior to submitting their notes to the SIU was or was not permitted by statute and regulation. Today's decision now brings legal, crystal clarity to the matters.

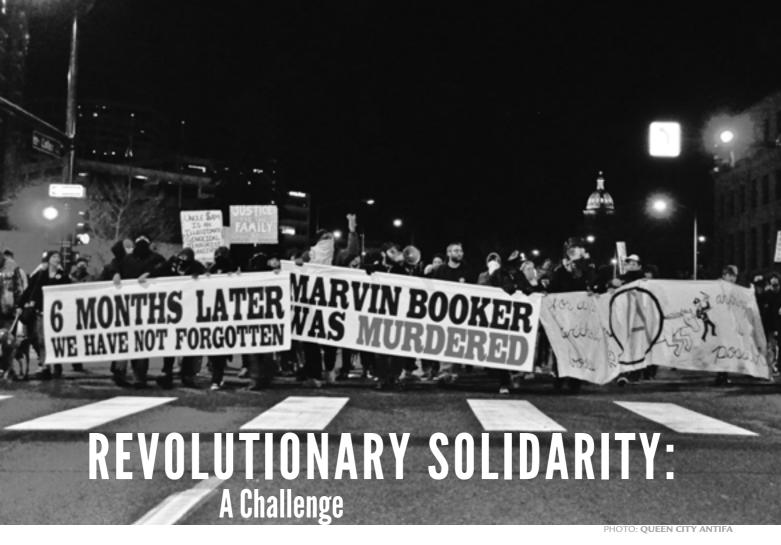
The Coalition Justice for Levi is elated that the courts have applied their ability and responsibility to examine, scrutinize, and make firm determination on these matters.

The dysfunction of a severely compromised public oversight and investigation system inflicts an extraneous injury and harm on those families and communities that must already grieve the loss of a loved one. It is hoped that this decision may spare others in the future who must already suffer the loss of a loved one at the hands of police but need not suffer the painful compounding of this pain with an egregious secondary harm.

The court's decision to award 100,00 dollars in costs to the appellants who have incurred years of crippling legal costs is to be celebrated, but should be held in light of the reality that it should never, ever have been left to pocketbooks or sacrifice of the families of those killed by police to bring these matters to light. The deep problems festering in the ambiguities of the relationship between the OPP, the SIU and the law have long been elucidated in reports commissioned by the Attorney General's office and an Ontario Ombudsman. Though awarded court costs now bring some relief, legal fundraising must nonetheless continue to meet substantial outstanding legal costs.

The Coalition Justice for Levi is encouraged by the court's decision. This decision upholds and strengthens the legal ability for public parties to access the powers of the courts and to ask those courts to examine and interpret questions of police accountability as they relate to law and public interest. Today's decision balances the need to protect the legal right of police officers to access council while equally ensuring the public that police officers may not breach the law as wrote because of internal policy or adherence to customary conduct or police culture. This is one step towards clarifying the boundaries of enhanced rights conferred upon police and a step towards using a legal framework to limit and safeguard the public against a rising atmosphere of police impunity.

To each and every person that has helped us with this campaign over these last years: thank you. Your support, solidarity and resources have empowered Ontario families to challenge and effect a substantive change in the real workings between police and the public. You are all really, really shiny super stars. We still need your help fundraising and linking this struggle and success to an ever growing grassroots movement dedicated to a vigilant dismantling of abusive police power...We need justice for all communities, not police impunity.



# By Wolfi Landstreicher

the tendency to fall into a defensive attitude in the face of repression is best counteracted by developing an understanding and practice of revolutionary solidarity.

Revolutionary solidarity is, above all, a revolutionary practice. What this means is that it carries within itself the aims of revolution. For this reason, as anarchists, we cannot base solidarity on any authoritarian or economic foundations. It is not a matter of obligation, duty or debt. No one owes anyone solidarity, regardless of what they have done or what they are going through. Rather the basis of solidarity is the recognition of one's own struggle in that of others – in other words, complicity. This is of major importance. If solidarity is the recognition of my own struggle in the struggle of others, it is

carried out in practice precisely through continuing that struggle, continuing to attack this social order, and doing so with a focus on what unites my struggle with that of others.

In this light, it should be clear that revolutionary solidarity is not merely support. On the practical level, it is obviously necessary to correspond and visit our imprisoned comrades, and to find ways to help them take care of various needs. But if this becomes the focus of what we call "solidarity", then we have reduced solidarity to mere charitable social work. The maintenance of connections, of friendships and comradeship in the midst of repression is one important factor for maintaining support. But what is most significant is active solidarity with the active revolt of our comrades who are locked up or otherwise suffering focused repression. It is within this context that

March against the police in Downtown Denver,CO on January 29th 2011. Marvin Booker (mentioned on banner) was murdered by the police well being detained. This is one example of revolutionary solidarity.

the specific activity of support (letters, visits, financial support, etc) can become a part of the practice of solidarity as the help to maintain communication between all of us fighting against this system.

So revolutionary solidarity is the complicity in revolutionary struggle between individuals in different specific situations who can nonetheless see that their revolutionary projects coincide. Let's consider the project of revolutionary struggle against the prison system. Comrades inside prison will inevitably involve themselves in struggles against the specific conditions of their imprisonment - for example, the ongoing struggle against the FIES (special isolation units) in Spanish prisons. There are various tactics used in these struggles. Underlying all of them is a refusal to cooperate with the prison regime. Thus, various sorts of strikes, collective revolts, riots and the destruction of prison property have all been used. But one of the most common tactics is the hunger strike. The reasons this tactic is so common among prisoners is that it can be used collectively

A RECENT EXAMPLES

# Revolutionary Solidarity with G20 Prisoners

Sometime earlier this week, we blocked 3 CN rail lines running east-west in Toronto. This small interruption to the flow of capital was taken in solidarity with all people fucked over by the state repression following the Toronto G20 in 2010.

The rail lines are also used by the Go train, which enables white flight out of Toronto, and contributes to the shitty expansion of the GTA.

We see this act as a continuation of that same struggle for which so many have been imprisoned.

can't stop won't stop.

with solidarity and love, some anarchists

or individually, it is completely in the hands of those using it and it puts a great deal of pressure on the prison authorities. At the same time, the effectiveness of the hunger strike especially when used by one or only a few individuals - depends on a situation of permanent conflict the outside, ongoing battle against the structures and individuals responsible repression. In practice this can include flyers, demonstration and graffiti campaigns

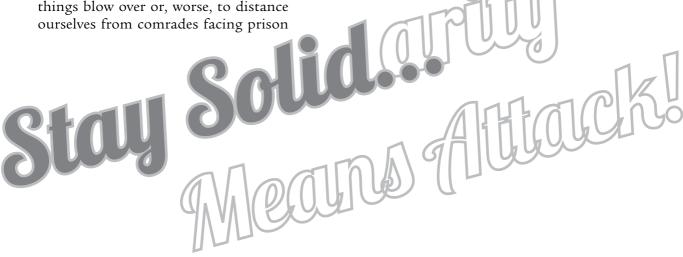
expressing solidarity with the comrades inside, but also in sabotage and other forms of attack against the police, judiciary and prison systems. Os Cangaceiros, a group of rebels in France, provide a fine example. From 1984 into the 1990's, they were involved in active sabotage of the prison system in solidarity with a number of prison revolts that were occurring in France. Along with a variety of acts of vandalism and sabotage and the theft and distribution of the plans for a major prison building project in France, they published significant analyses of the prison and justice system and their relationship to society as a whole. And many others chose to imitate their activity of sabotage against the prison system.

The sort of activity described above shows a principled approach to the struggle against the prison system and the practice of solidarity. They share a few things in common: they can be used autonomously outside the framework either of the institutions of the state or the institutions of the left (parties, unions and the like); they involve no delegation or mediation to be carried out; they do not involve negotiation or any sort of compromise with those in power. Of course, they do require a movement committed to an ongoing battle against the entire society of prisons, a movement in permanent conflict with the present social order. The lack of such a movement makes it easy to compromise one's stance whether because one is in prison oneself or because those one cares for are. But anarchist principles are not essentially moral, but have their basis in a logic of practice. When we put our time and energy into petitioning, negotiating, litigating and so on, this is time and energy taken away from the project of destroying the society of imprisonment and law. Furthermore, these practices are based in the institutions of the state, in the legal and judiciary system. Thus, they make us dependent upon the goodwill of the state and its institutions. This can only

end up strengthening the very institutions that we claim we want to put an end to. In addition, this dependence on the state as the very precise effect of undermining any trace of self-determination in our activity, thus undermining our capacity for direct action as well. How far this goes in deteriorating one's perspective and critical capacities becomes evident when the concessions granted by the state in these contexts - minor reforms or simple applications of existing laws - are proclaimed to be victories. Here the reformist mentality has come to dominate one's practice - the idea that one can use the most compromised means as long as they are "effective" in the most immediate sense. But for those who seek the destruction of the entire system of domination, these are not victories, but defeats, because they point to resignation in the face of a system that seems unassailable, moving one to use its means to achieve what, in the long run, can only be its ends.

So the practice of revolutionary solidarity presents us with a challenge. Repression is growing as is specific focus by the authorities on anarchists. We will likely see more and more of us under investigation, facing trial and spending time in prison. It is very easy in such situations to simply retreat, to let things blow over or, worse, to distance ourselves from comrades facing prison

or from actions that frighten us. This response would be a major victory for the state. So the challenge we face is that of developing the strength within ourselves to act on our own terms against the state and against is systems of repression while also learning to coordinate these actions without compromising ourselves. Since revolutionary solidarity, at least from an anarchist perspective, is the practical recognition of one's project of struggle within the struggle of another, it requires that we each act as we see fit against this order, as we are moved to act by our own confrontation with its oppressive power in our daily lives. But it also requires that we learn to weave these actions together in a way that strengthens them and makes their meaning clearer. There is no panacea, no organization or program, that can provide this, because all such panaceas require that we adjust ourselves to their requirements. Rather it is necessary to develop the clarity and candor from which relations of affinity can develop, spreading their complicity in revolt further and further and maybe even flowering into insurrection. This is the challenge we confront in the face of an increasingly repressive system of domination.



# "this life is bigger than this, bigger than lines drawn by governments"

by Adam Lewis

y name is Adam Lewis and I am an activist. I am part of seventeen people who were charged with conspiracy as a result of our activism against the G20 Summit in Toronto in June 2010. I was violently arrested by two plainclothes police officers on the morning of June 26th 2010. I was crossing a street in Toronto, when I was jumped, thrown to the ground and held down and handcuffed. I was only told that I was being arrested for mischief. The two police officers, one who refused to identify himself, said very little further to me. I was never formerly told I was under arrest, I wasn't read my rights and I wasn't told that there was a warrant for my arrest that had been issued and that's why I was currently face down on a narrow patch of grass on a Toronto street. And so began my formal engagement with the Canadian legal system...

My arrest on June 26th has now culminated in a guilty plea for counseling others to commit mischief to property. This marks the relative endpoint of a one and halfyear tour of the Canadian "justice" system. I spent two weeks at Maplehurst in a maximum security prison before I was let out on bail. Keep in mind that at this point I had no been convicted of any crime, I had not seen any of the evidence against me and that I was arrested before any of the so called "rioting" occurred on June 26th 2010. When I was finally

released on bail I was subject to a host of restrictive conditions. I was unable to associate or communicate, whether direct or indirect, with many of my close friends that I have engaged in political and social activism over the past five years. I was unable to leave my parents house unless accompanied by one of them. I was not allowed to plan or participate in any form of political demonstration, whether peaceful, non-violent or otherwise. If I broke any of the conditions I would be returned to jail with a breach charged and my parents would be on the hook for 75 000 dollars as my sureties. And although these conditions have relaxed mildly over the past one and half years, my life (as well as the lives of my parents, friends, loved ones and partner) has been put on hold.

This brings us to the current circumstances. Part way through the preliminary hearing where the Crown lays out its case against us, we were offered a plea deal. It was ridiculous and so we rejected it. In working through what a plea deal would mean for us as individuals and as a group we were forced to face the realities of our legal case, our lives and projected outcome if we were to go to trial. And so we made a choice. Six of us agreed to plea guilty and to go to jail for anywhere from six to twenty months, while eleven other people would have there charges dropped. We engaged in a collective process, with long meetings and

much discussion to figure out our best option in a process that has put us at a disadvantage from the start. We worked together, we maintained our commitment to one another as co-defendants and as friends, we made hard decisions and we may have made decisions that were not the most informed at various stages in the process. But we are at a point where we all agreed on what needed to be done.

And so I am one of six people (out of the current seventeen, and a previous total of twenty) to plea guilty to counseling others to commit mischief to property. We are "choosing" (in as much as anyone can actually make free and informed choices in legal system that is on the side of politicians and the police and where the police, Crown attorney's and politicians face no penalty, risk or accountability in this process) to end this process on our own terms as much as it is possible to do so. If we were to continue the judicial process we may be looking at a trial in one and a half to two years from now. That means we need to live with restrictive bail conditions for a further two years. That means that our lives are still on hold, and that we face the possibility of being convicted of conspiracy charges with a greater penalty sometime down the road. And so we have chosen to take this plea deal.

We have taken this plea deal not because we actually believe we have done anything wrong, but because the legal system in which we find ourselves has forced us to make difficult choices. This process has put us in a current position where we might face greater penalties somewhere down the line. And so we have chosen to end this process now, to have most of our friends charges dropped. This isn't a victory or a defeat – this is a reality that we are faced with.

Taking this plea deal now means several things: It means I will be sentenced to a jail term of six months for counseling unnamed, unknown and unspecific others to engage in property damage. It means eleven out of seventeen people will face

no punishment, it means that they are out of this process now and that they can get back to their lives, that they can get back to organizing and political activism. It means we end this now and that even those of us who will be going to jail can get back to our lives sooner rather than later. It means the Crown doesn't get any convictions for conspiracy charges.

Now a word on my actions, my statements and counseling. I do not regret any of my involvement in protest planning and activism around the G20 or at any other time. I did tell people that they should engage in processes and acts of resistance in ways that they feel are empowering and meaningful. I believe that social change comes in a variety of ways and that there are many forms of action that are both necessary and justified. I believe that living things are always more important than property. I believe that there is something inherently wrong with a society that thinks that the smashing of windows is somehow worse than when police engage in the widespread assault of human beings. I have been charged because the organizing that I did encouraged people to engage in property damage. And I will be going to jail for that organizing. The police, who beat, threaten and detain people during the G20 and on a general day to day basis in targeted communities are not held to account. They are allowed to do as they wish, they are allowed to act with impunity. This is the society that I believe needs to change. This is why I am an activist - because oppression and injustice are still ingrained within society.

I am an anarchist. That doesn't mean I believe in "chaos" or "disorder". It means that I believe that people must engage in direct action as individuals and groups to actually create change and a new, more free society. It means that I believe we can create communities that look after themselves, that are accountable and respectful to one another. I believe that governments, politicians, police forces,

corporations and countless others are part of what is standing in the way of creating a new and better society. I believe that these

are the people and systems responsible for continued injustice. They are responsible for the colonization Indigenous peoples and their lands. They are responsible for poverty, war, greed and injustice. They are responsible for the evils, oppressions and injustices that exist in the world. As such, they must be opposed. They must be resisted. All people have the ability to create a better world and that will occur in many different ways.

People may not agree with my politics, and we cannot expect everyone to agree. But what must be expected is that people get involved, people get mobilized, people get engaged and people get active.

This may come as a bit of a shock to some, that I am pleading guilty for counseling unnamed and unknown others to commit mischief to property. It has been agreed that I didn't counsel anyone specifically, but rather that my participation in meetings and the organization of protest actions against the G20 Summit in Toronto. That this participation and organizing led to the window smashing that occurred on the 26th of June 2010.

It was my suggestion that people engage in forms of action and resistance, in the spirit of a diversity of tactics, that they find empowering and useful for their particular analysis of the oppression and domination that exists within this society. It was my suggestion that action needs to

be taken, that there are profound injustices in this world that need to be changed, and that it is up to individuals, and groups to

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create this change. It is my belief that this change has not and will not come from governments and politicians who act within a system that serves the interests of profit and corporations over those of common people and the environment.

I stand by these statements. I stand by my belief that the direct action of individuals and groups is what is needed and necessary to create a more just society.

a more just society. I feel no shame, no remorse and no guilt over the actions and statements that have been attributed to myself. I stand firm in my belief that direct action is what is needed for social change. I stand firm in my belief that society would be better off without oppression and domination. I stand firm in my belief that society can be organized differently - that we can organize along lines that are based within communities themselves. I believe that people themselves can engage with one another to create meaningful relationships that are not built around hierarchies, but rather engage with one another on equal terms, in a spirit of solidarity. I believe that this means we need to stand up and fight for a better society and a better world. This means we need to resist the G20.

from: www.conspiretoresist.wordpress.com

# MANDY HISCOCKS STATEMENT TO THE COURT



# by Mandy Hiscocks

t's not every day you get the opportunity to speak directly to a judge, and I have a lot to say. This is my first opportunity to speak since this entire process started last June, so I hope you'll hear me out until the end. I plan to take about ten to fifteen minutes at most.

I don't know you as a person or as a judge, so my comments are directed at the legal system in general. I want to address some of the things you said on this matter in earlier sentencing hearings, particularly your references to the KKK. When you sentenced Peter, Adam, Erik and Leah to jail, you stated that this is not political, it is about our tactics. You mentioned the KKK, and compared their actions to those of the non-violent civil disobedience protesters of the 60s. I agree with you that the tactics used by the KKK are reprehensible. I disagree with you that that kind of violence against people is anything remotely like the property damage that occurred on the streets of Toronto during the G20 summit. Regardless, by focusing on the KKK's tactics and not their politics you've missed the point entirely. The problem with the KKK isn't only their tactics. It's the fact that they're a white supremacist group.

White supremacy is defined as "an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of colour by white peoples and

nations; for the purpose of establishing, maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege." I don't think you disagree with me that there is a system of wealth, power and privilege in this country. I benefit from this system every day, and so do you. We benefit on the backs of others, most of whom are people of colour. Systemic oppression is widespread in the legal system. Racial profiling affects who gets arrested in the first place; who gets charged and who gets sent home, whose charges the Crown decides to proceed with and whose they drop, who gets bail and who doesn't. It's not a secret that if you're in custody during your trial, your chances of conviction are higher. And even if you do get out on bail, who gets compliance checks and who doesn't, means some people end up back in jail on a breach while others don't. Who in this is more likely to plead guilty right away because they don't have the time, tools or money to defend themselves?

The fact is that lawyers are expensive and your chance of conviction depends on how much time your lawyer is willing to put into your case. Most judges are white, and the jury selection process means that if you're poor you'll almost certainly not end up with a jury of your peers. And finally, sentencing relies on privilege (your education level, your chance of employment, your income, prior run-ins with the law, and so on.)

I don't have proper statistics for all of the above, and anyway I know you know this stuff. I just want you to be aware that I know it too, and so do most of the people in this room today and in the video room. However, here are some statistics that I do have: According to the federal correctional investigator, over the past decade there has been a fifty-two per cent leap in the proportion of black offenders in federal incarceration. Black people make up roughly two point five per cent of Canada's population but nine point twelve per cent of federal prisoners. In Ontario, twenty per cent of the federal prison population is black. Keeping in mind that people of colour have been hardest hit by the economic downturn and the conservative policies of our current government, and keeping in mind all the ways in which the legal system disadvantages people of colour, is it really any wonder?

My point is that a few broken windows

and burned police cars at a protest will not lead us down the path of the KKK. The KKK targeted black people with overt violence and terror, and this system targets them with institutionalized racism, which is just a more subtle form of violence. In fact this legal system is doing the work of the KKK more than any anti-G20 protester ever could. It's very telling that the KKK was comprised in large part of wealthy

businessmen and lawmakers - the kinds of people our society and our legal system hold up as the best of the best. Perhaps this is why in 1987 Weatherman Linda Evans was sentenced to forty years for using false ID to get a firearm and harbouring a fugitive, despite the average sentence for that being two years. In the same year, a KKK leader named Don Black, who was

planning an invasion of Dominica with a boatload of explosives and automatic weapons, was sentenced to eight years, five of which were suspended, so that he ended up serving three.

White supremacy is wrong, it's violent and dangerous, whether it's at the hands of a fringe group like the KKK or an accepted institution like the criminal justice system.

It's not always what the "justice" system does that causes the problems, sometimes it's what it doesn't do. The courts simply do not consider systemic oppression and inequality. In a book called *The Red Lily*, Anatole France stated that "The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread." The book was written in 1894 in France, but that statement still applies here, today.

A crime is a crime, you say, regardless of who committed it, and what leads people to crime doesn't matter. In 1999

> the Supreme Court of Canada tried to address systemic injustice in their ruling on Regina vs Gladue. They stated that we need to acknowledge Indigenous people, the reasons they may wind up in the justice system, and the racist treatment and attitudes they encounter there. They recommended alternatives to prison sentences that mesh more with Indigenous cultures.

the circumstances of

According to people who work in the field, many Indigenous accused still don't know about Gladue reports or how to get them, and they aren't always informed by their lawyers. Judges continue to resist the sentencing principles outlined at the conclusion of the Gladue case.

According to Statistics Canada, in 2008/2009, ten years after the ruling,

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form of violence.

Aboriginal women represented twentyeight percent of all women remanded and thirty-seven per cent of women admitted to

sentenced custody. Today Aboriginal women, though less than two per cent of the Canadian population, make up thirty-four per cent of female federal inmates.

My point being, I don't have the power to change what happens in this legal system. I'm trying to indicate why I don't respect this legal system.

The crown wants this sentence to be a deterrent. It won't be. Please take a second to have a good look around the room. When i get taken out of

here do you think you'll have increased anyone's faith in the system? I am certainly not deterred, I'm just angry.

No matter what my sentence is today, it won't be about justice. Your system is not about justice. If it was, don't you think we would have come to you when the G20 decided to set foot here to pursue their obviously unjust austerity agenda? Don't you think we would have asked for your help when the police started to put up their fences and cages, and randomly arrest whoever they felt like so they could systematically abuse them in the detention centre?

If this system was about righting wrongs, don't you think we would come to you to hold the rich to account for their abuses against the poor, immigration officials to account for their abuses against people without status, and settlers to account for our abuses against Indigenous people?

We didn't and don't come to you. We won't ever come to you.

A court of real justice would defend people against aggressors. In this society, the privileged are the aggressors, but time after time you choose to protect their privilege and their property against people who are struggling to survive. You're doing it wrong.

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Let's not debate. The obvious answer to the violence and the chaos is the cops brought that. I'm going to try and finish.

This legal system that we have here is not equal, it's not fair and its not just. And a lot of people out there believe that it is. What I would like to impart to you is that I don't buy it and the statistics don't support it.

You speak of dignity, that everyone should be treated with

dignity. I agree with you. But you can't treat someone with dignity, or expect to be treated with dignity in return, while one person is up high and the other person is down low, while your boot is on their neck.

This is why we, myself and the people in the other room, don't have decorum in this system.

Throughout this farcical legal process that's coming to an end today the accused have been told that our actions were an attack on the rule of law, which is at the heart of our society. Well good. Our society is racist and colonial, its rooted in wealth and power, and so is the rule of law that upholds it.

And I'm going to leave this court room today, to quote Chilean anarchist Diego Rios:

"I am carrying all my hatred and contempt for power, its laws, its authority, its society, and I have no room for guilt or fear of punishment."

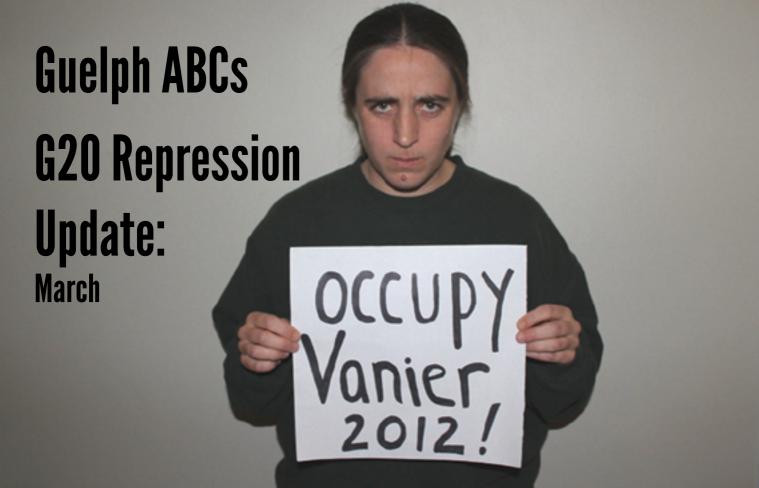


PHOTO: MANDY'S FRIEND

# By Guelph Anarchist Black Cross

Photo: Mandy Hiscocks is one of the G20 prisoners currently incarcerated in Vanier Centre for Women in Milton, Ont. It has been one and a half years since the leaders of the twenty richest nations and their commercial and financial interested convened in Toronto for a glamorized photo-op. In June 2010, the G20 Summit took over and militarized the core of Toronto, Canada's largest city, and saw a week of protests, actions and mass arrests.

In the lead up to the summit, police from different municipal, provincial ,federal policing and intelligent agencies formed the G20 Joint Intelligence Group to network and coordinate the state repression surrounding the G20 Summit. This included a number of tactics, including twelve undercover operations which led to the arrests of over twenty people on conspiracy charges.

During the weekend,militant actions were called by the Southern Ontario Anarchist Resistance (SOAR) and by a number of autonomous anarchist and indigenous groups. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, a break-away demonstration was called by SOAR called "Get Off the Fence". This action saw a five hundred plus anti-capitalist bloc wreak havoc on Toronto's financial and shopping districts, followed by generalized rioting throughout the core for hours following the demo.

What we have compiled here are some updates about anti-authoritarians and anarchists who have been facing serious criminal charges following the actions of people in the streets, and in meetings prior to the summit. Many of these cases are still open and there are many other people who have been convicted and are serving sentences who aren't tied to anarchist networks. We hope this will shed some light on what has happened since the riot.

# **G20 MAIN CONSPIRACY GROUP**

www.conspiretoresist.wordpress.com www.boredbutnotbroken.tao.ca

Twenty-one people were charged with being part of the G20 main conspiracy group, the crown alleged that there were upwards of fifty other co-conspirators who were never indicted. These charges stemmed from a one and a half year infiltration operation undertaken by OPP officers Bindo Showan and Brenda Carey.

The undercovers started infiltrating anarchists in Guelph in 2008, and later spread the operation to Kitchener-Waterloo, Toronto and other communities in Southern Ontario. There were other undercover operations in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal and upwards of a dozen police infiltrators.

By the time the case reached its preliminary hearing, charges were dropped against three defendants and one defendant received a suspended sentence in a plea resolution negotiated independently. In November, the remaining seventeen came to a plea resolution that saw charges of eleven of the defendants withdrawn and six agreed to pleading guilty and serving varying prison sentences.

### THE CONVICTIONS

The sentence lengths listed are before taking into account pretrial custody, house arrest, etc. Most people will serve about half of their sentences listed here.

**Erik Lankin** – 8 month sentence for one count of Counselling to Commit Mischief. Sentence began on November 28<sup>th</sup> 2011. Erik was released on January 26<sup>th</sup> 2012.

Adam Lewis – 6 month sentence for one count of Counselling to Commit Mischief. Sentence began on November 28<sup>th</sup> 2011. Adam was release on February 5<sup>th</sup> 2012.

**Peter Hopperton** – 8 month sentence for one count of Counselling to Commit Mischief. Sentence began on November 28<sup>th</sup> 2011. Peter is scheduled for release in mid-March, 2012.

**Leah Henderson** – 14 month sentence for one count of Counselling to Commit Mischief. Sentence began on December 20<sup>th</sup> 2011. Leah is scheduled for release in June, 2012.

**Alex Hundert** – 18 month sentence for one count of Counselling to Commit Mischief, and one count of Counselling to Obstruct Police. Alex hasn't begun to serve his sentence yet.

**Mandy Hiscocks** – 18 month sentence for one count of Counselling to Commit Mischief, and one count of Counselling to Obstruct Police. Sentence began on January 13<sup>th</sup> 2012. Mandy is scheduled for release in December 2012.

**Jaggi Singh** – Received a suspended sentence for one count of Counselling to Commit Mischief of 12 months probation. Jaggis probation began on June 21st 2011.

### **ROBIN HENRY**

Robin was the first G20 defendant to be convicted of two counts of Mischief Over 5000 dollars and one count of Masked with Intent for breaking windows at a Starbucks and Bell store.

Robin served nine months under strict bail conditions before his sentencing. In March 2011, Robin was sentenced to one year house arrest, followed by two years probation, a 5000 dollars fine and

three hundred plus community service hours. Robin is currently serving his sentence in London, Ontario.

# **RYAN RAINVILLE**

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Ryan Rainville received a conditional sentence of four months under house arrest, followed by four months curfew and then one year

# **PRISONERS ADDRESS**

# Leah Henderson

c/o Vanier Centre for women Box 1040 665 Martin St. Milton, Ontario L9T 5E6 Canada

# Amanda Hiscocks

c/o Vanier Centre for women Box 1040 665 Martin St. Milton, Ontario L9T 5E6 Canada

probation. Ryan had plead guilty to three counts of Mischief Over 5000 dollars for using a red and black flag and a hammer to destroy Toronto Police cruisers during the G20 riot. He also plead guilty to a Breach of Peace.

Ryans sentence took into account the ninety-six days he spent in the Toronto Metro West Detention Centre and Maplehurst Correctional Complex following his initial arrest on these charges. Ryan fought and won a trial where he contested charges of Assault Police with a Weapon and Obstruct Officer. These charges stemmed from accusations that a police cruiser Ryan had damaged was occupied.

On December 20<sup>th</sup> 2011, a member of the G20 Investigative Team came to his home at Sagatay Men's Residence to serve him with an appeal of his sentence. The State believes Ryans sentence was too light. It is clear that Ryans pride in his convictions and anarchist values have led them to target him in an attempt to send a clear message to other anarchists, that our politics and bodies will be criminalized if we do not fall in line.

Before his sentencing, Ryan had served over three months in prison, eight months under house arrest and five months of a restrictive curfew. He is currently serving his sentence for these charges of four months house arrest, four months curfew, followed by a year probation. It will be three years after the original event before Ryan is free of these charges.

Ryan's appeal hearing is scheduled for this spring.

GABC has just released a zine of Ryan's statement to the courts before his sentencing.

PRISONERS ADDRESS

# **Greg Noltie Rowley**

c/o Maplehurst C. Complex
PO Box 10
661 Martin St.
Milton, ON
L9T 2Y3

You can find it on our website www. guelphabc.noblogs.org to print and distribute.

### **GIRR ROWLEY**

See Guelph ABC's statement: "In the Face of the Courts" at www.guelphabc.noblogs.org

Girr was arrested in November of 2010 by the G20 Special Investigation Team for his alleged participation in the black bloc action. He was placed under house arrest in Rockwood, just outside of Guelph. He eventually had his conditions reduced to a curfew.

Following his preliminary hearing, he plead guilty to one count of Mischief Under \$5000, one count of Masked with Intent and one count of Public Nuisance. He was convicted on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 and is currently serving a nine month sentence. This is his first conviction.

# **KELLY PFLUG-BACK**

Kelly has been presented in the media as the "ring leader" of the black bloc action. She has faced some of the harshest repression. She spent two months in prison, before being released to house arrest with her parents. Kelly currently has a curfew and a lengthy non-association list which includes upwards of a hundred people.

Kelly was charged with thirteen counts including Mischief Over 5000 dollars, Conspiracy, Obstruct Police, Assault Police With a Weapon and Intimidation of a Justice System Participant. Kelly has had some of these charges dropped, currently she is facing seven counts of Mischief over 5000 dollars. Kelly has plead guilty and is awaiting sentencing. The Crown is looking for upwards of 2 years.

# GEORGE JOHN HORTON NORABUENA

George is facing nine charges for allegedly participating in the black bloc. George was arrested in Peterborough by the local police in on September 28<sup>th</sup> 2010. He was then transferred to Toronto by the G20 Investigation Team. George was denied bail and spent a week in the Toronto West Detention Centre, before being released.

George was originally charged with Assault Police Officer, Intimidation of Police Officer, Obstruct Police Officer, Masked with Intent, Weapons Dangerous, Possession of Stolen Property under 5000 dollars, and three counts of Mischief under 5000 dollars.

In Mid December 2011 George pled to three counts of Attempted Mischief Under 5000 dollars and one count of Disguised with Intent to Commit a Crime. The Crown dropped the possession of stolen property and weapons dangerous charges.

George has been in trial for the past two months for the remaining charges of Assault Police Officer, Intimidation of Police Officer and Obstruct Police Officer. These charges are related to the attack on the Police Scout Car 766 at the beginning of the breakaway march. Nicholas Cote and Ryan Rainville both had their charges dropped from the attack on the squad car.

Georges trial will have it's closing arguments and sentencing in March. The Crown is seeking nine months in prison for George.

### **BYRON SONNE**

http://www.freebyron.org/

Guelph ABC is not currently in contact with Byron or his support group.

On June 22<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Byron Sonne was arrested in his home in Forest Hill north of Toronto in relation to the G20 Summit. The police created a media spectacle of his arrest, making him out as some "bomb wielding terrorist" to justify the massive expenses of policing the meeting of the richest countries of the world.

Originally, Byron was arrested on six charges ranging from explosives to intimidating of a justice participant by threats. Byron was held without bail for total a total of 330 days. In February, Byron had four of his charges dropped and is currently in trial for the remaining two charges of Possession of Explosives for an Unlawful Purpose and a Counselling offence.

# **JULIAN ICHIM**

Julian Ichim, one of the original G20 Main Conspiracy Group defendants who had his charges dropped was charged with six counts of Disobey Court Order in relation to a number of posts on his personal blog. He is now facing federal offences before the courts.

In these posts, the crown alleges that Julian violated a publication ban around the G20 Main Conspiracy Group case by writing about his personal experiences with two undercover operatives. The publication ban was put in place in part to conceal the names and identities of undercover officers Brenda Carey (undercover identity: Brenda Dougherty) and Bindo Showan (undercover identity: Khalid Mohammad), but has since been rescinded due in part to the continued outing of these operatives on the internet.

Julian's trial is scheduled for mid-March.

### **DAN KELLER**

Dan's house was invaded and he was arrested on August 25<sup>th</sup> 2011 by the OPP Anti-Racketing Branch. He was charged with one count of Defamatory Libel and one count of Council Assault for allegedly posting information on a Kitchener-Waterloo activist website, www.peaceculture.org about the identity and where-abouts of G20 undercover operative Bindo Showan (Khalid Mohammad). Dan's pre-trial is scheduled for February and the crown is seeking two and a half years.



Earful of Queer Review: http://earfulofqueer.wordpress.com

The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Violence

within Activist Communities





By Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani & Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha. Preface by Andrea Smith Publisher: South End Press www.southendpress.org

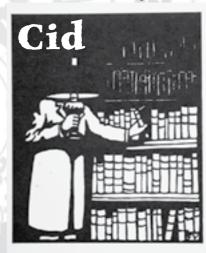
any friends and I have been continually frustrated by how activist communities continue to silence survivors and perpetuate abuse. It is no surprise that this compilation of essays, personal stories, and manifestos, became an instant 'must read.'

TRSAH is expansive in its reach: topics range from the political reasons violence occurs (and to whom it is practiced on), to survivor-ship, reclaiming space, and concrete action plans. Its material is as relevant as a 101 text, as it would be to a perpetrator of intimate violence, or for a community trying to eliminate the prison industrial complex.

I read this book hoping for new suggestions because in my experience, many of the existing activist methods for dealing with abuse and accountability do not work. Although this book couldn't possibly provide one new and effective approach, it takes the time to thoroughly

examine intersecting issues and it is a great way to learn from organizers who have shared their decades of insight.

This book is an essential read because whose life hasn't been affected by violence? This book offers support and tested solutions. True to its title, *TRSAH* is a tool to start right where you are; by creating strong accountable communities which can tackle intimate violence together.



# OUTLINTERVIEW

# WHAT/WHO IS OUTLINE? WHY WAS OUTLINE STARTED?

OUTline is a resource and support service specializing in questions relating to sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Currently OUTline operates a confidential and anonymous peer-support Phone Line, a Q&A blog, offers workshops to the campus and community and creates a queer presence at many awareness events.

The Phone line is run by trained volunteers from both campus and community and the program itself is coordinated by a part-time staff person.

OUTline started as service called Gayline in the summer of 1975. Gayline was run through Guelph Gay Equality (now Guelph Queer Equality) and at first was an advertisement line for campus and local events. In the autumn of 1975, a live person providing peer counselling was available.

In 1996/97 the service received start-up funding to become its own autonomous service, OUTline. This allowed it to focus on creating a more inclusive service that could reached an audience that Gayline was not able to reach.

# WHAT KIND OF TRAINING DO YOUR VOLUNTEERS GET?

Phone Line volunteers are required to complete a thirty five-hour training program before they start on the lines. The training program covers topics like sexual orientation and gender identities, active listening, anti-oppression, crisis situations, mental health, sexuality, relationships and self-care.

# HOW MANY FOLKS HAVE YOU HELPED SINCE THE BEGINNING OF

# OUTLINE? IS OUTLINE ONLY FOR STUDENTS IN GUELPH?

It would be impossible to quantify exactly how many people OUTline has helped since Gayline 1975. Over the past three years, OUTline has:

- Had 5883 individual post views on the Ask OUTline blog and 25 questions asked
- · Answered 244 support calls
- Reach 1275 people through outreach activities such as workshops and awareness events
- · OUTline is available to anyone who lives in Guelph/Wellington County.

# WHAT ARE OUTLINE'S IDEAS ABOUT IDENTITIES AND LABELS?

Below is our perspective statement, developed by the OUTline Advisory Committee in 2008.

# OUTLINE'S PERSPECTIVE ON IDENTITIES AND LABELS

OUTline recognizes that the very nature of Queer identities is that they are difficult to define and that this is often argued to be an essential aspect Queerness. From time to time, OUTline will vary the language we use in keeping with the concept of fluid identities and context-specific discourse.

Sexual and gender diversity includes, but is not limited to: lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, queer, questioning, intersex and two-spirited, among many others.

We oppose the hierarchical arrangement of these identities, though we recognize that in our society power is differentially ascribed based on perceived identity. We similarly seek to challenge

categorization of identities and the creation of discrete or imposed boundaries that limit individuals' choices, freedoms, abilities or aspirations. We acknowledge that enumerating labels is unavoidable at times but that it also propagates the notion that people/identities can be captured in discrete categories or pigeonholes.

We further acknowledge that the term 'Queer' is used by some as a verbal short-hand to represent our communities and is a source of empowerment for some, but that it is also problematic because it renders differences as invisible and alienates some members of our communities because of its historical (and sometimes current) hurtful uses.

# WHAT KIND OF QUESTIONS DOES OUTLINE GET ASKED? ARE THEY USUALLY ONLY QUESTIONS ABOUT COMING OUT?

Many of our calls are not specifically about coming out per se. Some callers are looking for a friendly voice to help process feelings or attractions, but most just want to know they are speaking with someone who will let them be who they are and not judge them. For some of our callers without the internet, we are a way to break some of the isolation they are feeling.

We do get questions about how to meet other LGBTIQQ2+identified people and about specific resources. We have also received calls where people needed chat or vent about a relationship.

Honestly, we're open to talking about most things. Sometime it's nice to talk with someone who can appreciate your context. We don't always have people in our lives with who we can talk to, especially if we are afraid of their reaction or judgement. The volunteers are a pretty friendly bunch and love to chat.

What kind of support do you offer to individuals struggling with sexual/gender identity or coping with discrimination?

We provide a listening ear and a genuine desire to support people going through a variety of situations. We can ask questions and help an individual problem-solve situations. Wherever possible, we can provide resources and referrals if a caller wants one. We do not provide specific advice, as we believe the best way to help people is to allow them to make their own decisions. We're also confidential and don't require any identifying information to access our services.

# WHAT IS CAMPOUT? WHAT HAPPENS THERE?

CampOUT is a separate program run out of the Centre for New Students in Student Life. It is a space for people to meet face-to-face in an undisclosed location and chat about anything they may be facing. The group is organized by a facilitator that will also bring resources and topics of conversation. It's a great space for people that are interested in meeting other LGBTIQQ2+-identified individuals in a less public space.

**Support Phone Line: 519-836-4550** 

Mondays 3:30 - 6:00 pm

Wednesdays 6:00 - 9:00 pm

Fridays 1:00 - 3:00 pm

For immediate assistance call:

The Distress Line: 519-821-3760

LGBT Youth Line: 1-800-268-9688

# **Not Your Mom's Trans 101**



here is a huge problem with the way that people are taught about gender in this society. Children are indoctrinated early to believe that there are two sexes, corresponding with two genders, which are both immutable and non-voluntary, and completely beyond our control. This worldview is called the gender binary, and it has no room in it for us.

Trying to teach a new perspective to the victims of this extremely aggressive( brainwashing can be daunting. In fact, the task can seem downright impossible. The temptation, therefore, is to "dumb things down" for the benefit of a cisgender audience. This situation has given rise to a set of oversimplifications collectively known as "Trans 101." These rather absurd tropes, such as "blank trapped in a blank's body" cause confusion among even well-meaning cis folks, feed internalized transphobia among us trans people, and provide

endless straw-man fodder for transphobic 'radical feminists,' entitled cisgender academics, and other bigots.

Near the beginning of my transition, I myself taught "Trans 101" this way. Because I didn't know any better. Because I had been taught to think of myself in terms of these same useless tropes, as an "FTM," as a "female man," as somebody who was "changing sexes." Eventually, through a lot of intense discussions and a lot of tough love from people who were more knowledgeable, more radical, and more politically sophisticated than myself, I came to see things very differently.

I haven't tried to teach Trans 101 since extracting my head from my rectum. But I think the time has come for me to tackle the problem of explaining and defining what it means to be transgender without resorting to cissexist language. It strikes me as I contemplate this task, that Trans 101 is generally not only dumbed-down, but also declawed. There are truths that

I must speak here that are incredibly threatening to a cissupremacist worldview, that attack its very foundations. But I for one am willing to do that. I am not here to make cis people comfortable or to reassure them that they are still the center of the gendered universe. In fact, I am totally fine with doing the opposite.

Without further ado, let's begin.

## **GENDER ASSIGNED AT BIRTH**

Let's start at the beginning. A baby

is born. The doctor says "It's a boy" or "It's a girl" based on the appearance of the child's genitals. If the genitalia cannot be easily categorized according to binary standards- that is, if the child is intersexthe doctor makes a decision. Surgery is then generally performed on the unconsenting infant to render its body more socially acceptable.

Whether the baby is intersex or not, the child is then raised as whatever arbitrary gender the doctor saw fit to assign.

"Cisgender" is the term for people who have no issue with the gender that they were assigned at birth. For whatever reason, they are able to live somewhat comfortably within the gender in which they have been cast. No one really knows why so many people are capable of fitting into such arbitrary categories.

Transgender people cannot accept our assigned genders. We know ourselves to be something different than what we were told to be. We do not see the random gender scripts we were given by society as relevant to us. We know that there is a different way, a way of autonomy, self-creation, and self-definition, and that this is the way we must follow, because we can never be happy with the parameters that have been mandated for our behavior and our bodies.

# THE BINARY

All cis people and many trans people are binary-identified. Given the options of "man" or "woman," we who are binary-

identified are able to be comfortable with one, even if it is the opposite of what we were assigned. For example, I am a man who was assigned to live as a woman, therefore I am a trans man. My father is a man who was assigned to live as a man, therefore he is a cis man. Both of us are binary identified, both men, even though he is cis and I

am trans.

It is a mystery why so many people are comfortable being categorized in just one of two ways. Just as nobody knows why there are so many cis

people, nobody knows why there are so many binary identified folks.

But there are many trans people who are neither male nor female. They cannot be categorized as "either/or." These people may use terms for themselves like genderqueer, androgynous, agender, or neutrois. They often use gender-neutral pronouns such as "ze/hir/hirs" or "they/them/their/theirs." They can be both male and female, or none of the above, multigender, genderless, or something else.

Transgender
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In typical trans 101 discussions, right now I would probably be explaining to you that "gender is a spectrum" and drawing a cute little line graph labeled "m" at one end and "f" at the other. But this would be fallacious, as well as total bullshit. Gender is not a line, it is a huge three-dimensional space too big to be bounded by the concepts of "male" and "female." Being trans is not always about falling "in between" binary genders, and as often as not, it's about being something too expansive for those ideas to have meaning at all.

### **SELF IDENTIFICATION**

The language of selfidentification is often used to describe trans people. "George identifies as a man." "I respect Judy's identification as a woman." "Chris just told me that ze identifies as 'genderqueer.' Oh dear, that pronoun is going to take some getting used to." An organization I know, in an effort to be trans friendly, has posted little signs on their bathroom doors, underneath the "MENS" and "WOMENS" signs that we know so well, saying "Self-identified men welcome" and "Self-

identified women welcome" and "please be respectful of diversity."

This co-opting of the language of selfidentification is not only condescending, it completely missed the point.

Cis people seem to think that selfidentification is only for trans folks. They don't have to "identify" as men and women- they just ARE! Their gender isn't "self-identified," it's "self-evident!" What they fail to understand is that self identification is the only meaningful way to determine gender. Any other method is wholly dependent upon what that doctor said way back when we were still wrinkly, writhing, screaming newborn messes, completely unformed as individuals and without any identity at all to speak of, too bloody and scrunchy-faced. The fact is that cis people self-identify toothey just happen to agree with what the doctor said all those years ago. Anybody who answers the question of "are you a man?" or "are you a woman?" with "yes" has just self-identified.

I know what you're thinking. You're thinking "but what about bodies? What about genitals? What about chromosomes? What about hormones? What about SEX? Doesn't that have any bearing on gender?"

Be patient, my darlings. I'll get to that in just a moment.



The fact is that the concept of binary sex is based on the fallacious idea that multiple sex characteristics are immutable and must always go together...

# **BODIES**

Almost every Trans 101 will contain the truism "Sex is between your legs, gender is between your ears."

Gag.Or they may say "Sex is physical, gender is socially constructed."

This simply isn't true.

Sex is no more an immutable binary than is gender. There are intersex people who are born with non-binary genitalia, as I have already mentioned. There are people with hormonal anomalies. In fact, hormone levels vary wildly within the categories of cis male and cis female. Chromosomes, too, vary. If you thought "XX" and "XY" were the only two possible combinations, you have some serious

googling to do. In addition to variations like XXY, XXYY, or X, sometimes cis people find out that they are genetically the "opposite" of what they though they were–that is, a 'typical' cis man can be XX, a 'normal' cis woman can be XY.

The fact is that the concept of binary sex is based on the fallacious idea that multiple sex characteristics are immutable and must always go together, when in fact many of them can be changed, many erased, and many appear independently in different combinations. "Female" in sex binary terms means having breasts, having a vagina, having a womb, not having a lot of body hair, having a highpitched voice, having lots of estrogen, having a period, having XX chromosomes. "Male" means having a penis, not having breasts, producing sperm, having body hair, having a deep voice, having lots of testosterone, having XY chromosomes. Yet it is possible to isolate, alter, and remove many of these traits. Many of these traits do not always appear together, and before puberty and after menopause, many of them do not apply.

And what about women who get hysterectomies? Or who have had mastectomies for reasons related to breast cancer? Are they not women?

What about a soldier whose dick gets blown off by a mine? Is he not a man?

The fallacies of binding identity to bodies, which are fragile, changeable things, subject to injury, mutilation, maiming, decay and ultimate destruction, should by now be clear.

Sex is as much a social construct as gender, as much subject to self identification, and besides all that, quite easy to modify.

Sex is as much a social construct as gender, as much subject to self identification, and besides all that, quite easy to modify. Surgical and hormonal techniques are only becoming more sophisticated. If

there ever was a need to consider biology destiny, that time is surely past.

The entire concept of "sex" is simply a way of attaching something social-gender- to bodies. This being the case, I believe the most sensible way to look at the question of sex now is this: a male body is a body belonging to a male-that is, someone who identifies as male. A female body is a body belonging to a female- that is, someone who identifies as female. Genderqueer bodies belong to folks who are genderqueer, androgynous bodies belong to androgynes, and so forth, and so on.

This is why I question the value of phrases like "man in a woman's body" or "male to female." Who is to say we ever were the "opposite sex?" Personally I will never again describe myself as "born female." I was born a trans male and my years of confusion were due to being forcefully and repeatedly told that I was something else. This body is not a woman's. It is mine. Neither am I trapped in it.

None of what I say here is to minimize the necessity of surgery. Many trans people do experience body dysphoria. Many of us do seek hormones, surgery, and other body modifications. But the point is that, while such modifications may be necessary for our peace of mind, they are not necessary to make us "real men" or "real women" or "real" whatevers. We're plenty real right now, thank you.

# **OPPRESSION**

This brings us, I think, to the most important topic of all, and the topic which is most commonly left out of any Trans 101: transphobia and cissexism and how to avoid them.

"Cissexism" can be defined as the system of oppression which considers cis people superior to trans people. Cissexism is believing that it is "natural" to be cis, that being trans is aberrant. Cissexism is holding the genders of trans people to

more intense scrutiny than the genders of cis people. Cissexism is defining beauty and attractiveness based on how cis people look. Cissexism is prioritizing cis people's comfort over trans people's ability to survive. Cissexism is believing that cis people have more right to have jobs, go to school, date and have sex, make decisions about their bodies, wear the clothes they want, or use public restrooms than trans people do.

Transphobia is irrational fear and hatred of trans people. Transphobia is Silence Of The Lambs. Transphobia is referring to transgender surgery as self-mutilation. Transphobia is believing that trans people habitually "trick" or "fool" others into having sex with us. Transphobia is believing that we are out to rob you of your hetero-or-homosexuality. Transphobia is when trans people are stared at, insulted, harassed, attacked, beaten, raped, and murdered for simply existing.

If you want to be a good ally, you need to start taking cissexism and transphobia seriously right now. That means getting our goddamn pronouns right and not expecting a cookie for it. That means learning our names. That means not asking invasive questions or telling us how well we "pass." (Passing generally means "looking cis." Not all of us want to look like you, thank you very much.) That means deleting the words "tranny" and "shemale" from your vocabulary. That means understanding the immense privilege you have in your legally recognized, socially approved, medically assigned gender.

That means realizing that this is just the beginning. ,and that you have a lot to learn. That means realizing that it would be intrusive and importunate to ask the nearest trans person to explain it all to you, as if they didn't have better things to do. That means hitting the Internet and doing all that you can to educate yourself. And once you've done all that, maybe you can call yourself an ally, that is, if you're

still genuinely willing to join us in the hard work of making the world a less shitty place to be trans.

This will be a work in progress. I expect to receive a lot of commentary on this piece. I expect that it will be edited and possibly revised almost beyond recognition. I am OK If you want to be a good ally, you need to start taking cissexism and transphobia seriously right now.

with that. As always, there is more work to do. Trans 101 is a huge deal. Revising the way that it is discussed and taught is not a task for just one person. It's something the entire community must take on.

This is only a first step. But I still hope we learned something today.

From: www.tranarchism.com



# The Letter

# a patriarchy intervention proposal

n Wednesday, August 17th, I was presented with a really good question that followed a very astute observation: "It seems as though you've been made really sad and disempowered by the fact that, practically speaking, almost nothing has been done to help you foster equality within your community. Uh... what do you want to do about that?"

Initially, I "just wanted to clear 'Things' up" for folks – but then I remembered I'd already spent countless hours trying to do that: if, through the various emails, letters and conversations I'd had with friends, I hadn't yet been clear enough, I needed to draw a line, set my boundaries, and put the ball in other peoples' courts when it came to seeking dialogue to clarify "what happened". (This is still the case and I still welcome individuals who are curious to engage with me.)

So I gave it a bit more thought. What I wanted was to stop conveying so many facts and feelings, and to start conveying needs and requests. Instead of only sharing information about traumatizing experiences with my ex and hoping to build a net of humans who would somehow feel inspired to challenge intimate violence within our community, I wanted to share information about strategies to practically build a community of friends and allies who could become better empowered to challenge intimate violence within our community. The difference is that when you only offer a story, you offer observations and convey emotion. Offering tools and ideas on how to use them is a completely different way of communicating: Here, we are breaking down needs and requests.

Over the span of two months – eleven multiple-hours-long meetings with Holly, a dozen-or-so evenings spent at home editing and re-editing, and at least one seriously depressed, defeatist conversation – this letter was crafted meticulously, and with a fuck-tonne of love, energy and courage.

My intentions in sharing these tools, these words, this love, energy and courage, with you, is so that sometime soon, I might eventually be able to walk the streets of my home without the sharp, painful trepidation that informs every step I take, that I might eventually be able to make choices that aren't shadowed with flashbacks of the most traumatizing consecutive forty days of my life, and that I might again some day be able to call my abusive ex-partner "friend". My intentions are to get that ball rolling. My intentions are to share these tools so that, maybe, you will become a part of that process for myself and for the many survivors in our community.

### - Amelia

A little over a year has passed since I was sexually assaulted by my close friend. In the time since then, a lot has happened for me. I have experienced a very deep depression, contemplated killing myself, and re-experienced past traumas. I have learned that healing is not a linear process. I have gone through so many emotions and states of mental health, only to revisit them a week, or months later. I have felt isolated, alienated, and I have also at times felt supported.

I have learned, in my own unique experience as a survivor, that my healing comes from a place from(delete) within.

I realize now that it has little to do with what is said or learned through a process of perpetrator accountability. Nothing will ever change what has happened. While perpetrator accountability remains very important to me, I know that it is a process that I am not responsible for. I am also learning how to exercise compassion for myself. As I move deeper through self-healing I continue to find how deeply ingrained those feelings of guilt, shame and fear are in me in spite of any training, or awareness I might have. It shows me how much and how deeply I still need to heal - how deeply we all do.

During that last year, I have gone further into issues of gender-based violence in its many forms, and I have been empowered and able to support other survivors. I have watched my friend survive intimate violence and heard her experience of not feeling supported and I have heard the stories of other survivors. The politicization of this kind of violence has inspired, empowered, and filled me with a rage so powerful that only my heart can harness it.

I am inspired to write this letter because I need you to hear these experiences, and I need you to listen to and validate your own. I want you to be a part of community accountability, to reflect upon and understand the way your participation (or perhaps lack of) in support and accountability has impacted our experiences as survivors. I want to encourage you to understanding that is every one's responsibility to create a community that is not only equipped to deal with sexual assault, intimate violence, etc, but to create a community of people that is solid enough to not let it happen in the first place. This affects all of us. No one should have to do this work alone.

- olly

# Q. WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF

# **INTIMATE VIOLENCE?**

A. Intimate violence is when... ...someone violates boundaries and/or neglects the needs of their partner or intimate friend. Simply put, it can be defined as disrespect for the boundaries and needs of a partner.<sup>1</sup>

Intimate violence is about attaining and sustaining power and control. Power and control are not inherently negative: However, when one person tries to hang onto more of the power and control in a relationship, they are not sharing power and control equally with their partner. This often results in one person gaining decision-making status and superiority, while another person's autonomy is treated as less-than-equal. Inequalities don't have to be intentional in order for them to exist - someone might be abusing their power and controlling their partner without "intending" to. Oftentimes, this can be the product of one's relative privilege2 (in the case of intimate violence, sometime those privileges pertain to gender).

Intimate violence creates inequality by taking power away from someone through actions such as sexual assault, or through behaviors such as coercing someone to do things they are not completely comfortable with, calling them names, or intimidating them.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes, intimate violence works by, over longer periods of time, creating an atmosphere in which one person becomes disempowered in asserting his or her needs.

Physical assault of any kind can also sometimes be a part of Intimate Violence. Obviously, there are times when physical assault has nothing to do with intimate relationships (E.g. between strangers).

Sexual assault is a kind of physical assault. Sexual assault is defined by any unwanted sexual touch – sexual touch that occurs without complete and enthusiastic consent. Sexual assault can sometimes occur outside of intimate relationships – most of the time, however, sexual assault

occurs between people who know each other, oftentimes "in the home".4

Generally speaking, we refer to individuals who have suffered oppressions of intimate violence as "survivors". This terminology is meant to be more empowering than "victim".

# Q. WHAT MYTHS AROUND INTIMATE VIOLENCE (AND SUPPORTING SURVIVORS) HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY? WHAT ARE SOME FORMS THESE MYTHS HAVE TAKEN?

A. There is a long list – we'll answer by pointing out the ones we've seen most:

**Hierarchies of Violence** – the notion that some forms of violence are somehow more-worth validating (or "more serious") than other forms.

E.g.: "That experience isn't as serious as..."; "Being sexually assaulted is less serious than getting beat up."; "Getting your ass kicked is less serious than being in an abusive relationship."; "Isn't So-and-So's situation overshadowing yours?"; "This is taking away from the real work."

# Supporting Someone can Include Down-Playing Individual Experiences

- a myth that dismisses survivor experiences and, generally, comes out of misinformation about how to support people.

E.g. "It's not that bad."; "Aren't you exaggerating?"; "You should be glad, at least they didn't hit you."; "It'll just get better some day."

The Personal is Not Political – the idea that what happens between partners is somehow not a political issue (and therefore not part of "the struggle", or a community issue); that intimate violence between partners is taboo.<sup>5</sup>

E.g. "It's none of my business."; "That's between \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_."; "I don't want

to interfere or rock the boat or cause drama."; "That is not my responsibility."

**Preventing Abuse is the Survivor's Responsibility**<sup>6</sup> – similar to the last myth, this is idea that individuals who are oppressed (here specifically by Intimate Violence) are responsible for preventing their oppression, rather than perpetrators or the community/society.

E.g. "Did you do anything to prevent what ultimately happened?"; "I want to hear about ways that you (the survivor) plan to be more responsible for this."; "I told you he was like that."; "It's out of my hands – I don't want to get into that."

A "Survivor" Fits into a Rigid Definition – a myth heavily reliant upon the above myths, particularly hierarchies of violence, and that preventing abuse is a survivor's responsibility. This myth creates the idea that "a survivor" must have a very specific experience in order to be worthy of validation and support.

E.g. A white, "conservatively dressed" woman who is assaulted by "a crazy guy" jumping out of the bushes, is "a survivor"; a person who was abused at home by their partner somehow is not.

The "Perfect Survivor" (another prominent example): a white, "conservatively dressed" woman who is assaulted by "a crazy guy"; only screams "No" and "Stop", repeatedly; does not (effectively) physically defend herself; calls the police right away; reports to a hospital right away; etc is "a survivor" – a person who experiences intimate violence from their partner at home, or who defended their self, or who didn't call the police, etc. is somehow "not really a survivor"

The Right Way and The Wrong Way for a Survivor to Respond/React<sup>7</sup> – the idea that all survivors of Intimate Violence aught to react or respond in certain ways (oftentimes contingent upon a lot of judgments).

E.g. "Can you believe they called the police?! That's terrible!"; "She shouldn't have yelled at him like that."; "They're being too stubborn about this – can't they just accept what happened and move on?"

**Problem Solved** – a state of delusion that friends, family, and community may be under in which they believe that the conflict has been resolved as best it can.

E.g. a perpetrator of intimate violence has (simply) said "I'm sorry" or has (simply) said "Yea, I guess what I did was sort of fucked up", and thus somehow deserves exoneration (without having to take on any further accountability for their actions or oppressive behaviors.)

**Time to Move On...** – that conflict resolution must submit to an idea of timelines held by community and/or society; that these "resolutions" necessitate the survivor reach a point at which "everything is okay", regardless of if their needs have ever been met or their experiences ever validated.

E.g. "You should accept the apology and move on."; "Maybe you should give up now."; "You should probably just go away (and leave your community/the city/the province)."; "Stop being stubborn about it."; "It's been a year; Isn't it time that you two make up?"

# Alleviating Communally-Felt Tension - that the survivor is the sole party responsible for banishing taboos<sup>8</sup>, by changing their mind about their needs, exonerating perpetrator, or "moving on".

E.g. "When will they let 'things' go back to normal?"; "Once the survivor 'truly heals', we'll be able to go back to not dealing with this drama anymore.";

**Time Heals All Wounds** - that addressing perpetrator accountability, relieving communally-felt tension, or empowering the survivor to realize true equality, can somehow happen by sitting

back and waiting (ignoring/neglecting the perpetrators, the situations, or the survivors). Neglecting to deal with a situation of Intimate Violence means that it will eventually be forgotten about and become less burdensome (thus requiring no further attention from individual family or community members). This mythical idea completely dismisses the needs of a survivor.

E.g. "This will all blow over eventually."; "Give it time - things will [magically] get better!"; "After 'the revolution', we'll be able to properly deal with 'things'."

# Q. WHAT OBSERVATIONS HAVE YOU PERSONALLY MADE? (BOTH DURING AND AFTER YOUR INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES.)

A. Many, if not all of, the myths mentioned above:... ...these myths derail the impact of intimate violence; minimize experiences, needs and feelings; and deny survivors equal autonomy.

We've also seen and experienced much of the following:

- · Judgment and blame
- · Counter-organizing9
- Support from a couple of close friends with pro-equality analyses; some support from SACHA, as well as sometimes from random community members (who may be unaware of the seemingly unintentional impact of their actions).
- · Continued violations of boundaries perpetrators failing to acknowledge the needs of those they have hurt by neglecting the boundaries that survivors and community members have requested (E.g. needs for accountability, justice, validation; boundaries concerning physical space, communication, etc.)<sup>10</sup>
- Physical responses to trauma (severe migraines; fainting; pain; digestive dysfunction; sleep paralysis)

- · Recurring nightmares
- Flashbacks
- Isolation
- Lack of consistency in support (supporters not following through with agreements, people being supportive in theory but seldom in practice, etc.)<sup>11</sup>
- Lack of individual (or community) preparedness in recognizing and dealing with intimate violence.

# Q. WHAT FEELINGS HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED, BOTH AS THE RESULT OF THE TRAUMA OF INTIMATE VIOLENCE, AND AS A RESULT OF COMMUNITY RESPONSES?

A. The following is a short list, relatively speaking:

self-consciousness

fear\*

panic

shame

guilt

betraval

devastation

depression

anxiety

anger

damaged self-esteem

panic

shame

apprehension

hesitancy

nostalgia

tension

: 1

anguish

burn out

alienation

vulnerability

resent

disheartenment

frustration

contempt

isolation

\* Fear... Of seeing our abusers; of reliving past traumas; that if our perpetrators have an established pattern

of abusive behavior, they will hurt someone else; of judgment from family members, friends and community at large; of our perpetrators retaliating (subtly or otherwise)

# Q. IN WHAT WAYS IS INTIMATE VIOLENCE MADE TO SEEM NORMAL?

A. All of the above said Myths reinforce that Intimate Violence is normal or "okay". ...Likewise, these myths exist because of how deeply ingrained and internalized intimate violence has become in our lives.

Violence is minimized in our own lives as a coping mechanism for dealing with the day to day oppressions, dissatisfactions, violations and unmetneeds we each experience. Validating someone's experiences of intimate violence oftentimes means validating our own personal struggles with oppression. As a result of not always being fully prepared to do this in our own lives, we are unable to validate violence in the lives of those around us.

Subscribing to these myths enforces the oppression of our families, friends and community members merely by not challenging violence (in our own personal lives as well as in the lives of others).<sup>12</sup>

# Q. HOW CAN ALLIES (PEOPLE WHO WANT REAL ANTI-OPPRESSION AND EQUALITY) BETTER SHOW SUPPORT?

A. A lot of ways for folks to be supportive are fairly accessible and oftentimes free. (This doesn't always make them "easy"):

# Self-work and self-reflection

Engaging in open and honest ways with each other and survivors of intimate violence -- initiating accountability and support; not 'waiting' for survivors to take the lead or bottom line their own support; checking in with survivors about their needs around these things and respecting those needs.

Attending or organizing free workshops about how to support survivors, like those offered by SACHA

Attending or organizing free workshops on anti-oppression, like those offered by OPIRG

Devoting some portion of our spare time to considering the impacts of intimate violence, reading about it, discussing its existence within our lives and communities

**Reading about it** – it's everywhere.<sup>13</sup> Not assuming one's "work is done" after doing one or two of these things: achieving equality and anti-oppressive relationships happens in the way one lives every day, not the actions they take on one or two weekends of the year. <sup>14</sup>

# Q. YOU'VE MENTIONED A LOT ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY ... WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES?

- A. Generally speaking, the following are the bare-bones of an accountability process:<sup>15</sup>
- 1. Recognizing and understanding hurt/suffering/pain caused by perpetrator's actions and behaviors
- 2. Acknowledging harm done upon a survivor, their community, family and friends.

Making appropriate restitution to survivor. (Restitution here relying on survivor's needs, or the needs of the damaged community of family if the survivor has chosen to no longer participate.)

Developing and demonstrating skills toward transforming shitty, hurtful attitudes and behaviors.

3. Actively working toward practical and sustainable equality (wherein power and control are equally shared, valued and honored) within all relationships

It's up to community members to take survivor needs into account and creatively use these bare bones in a communally-created accountability process. Community members can be actively involved in the accountability process by contributing ideas for accountability for perpetrators (who may be their friends), while also respecting the needs of survivors (who may also be their friends).

An example of accountability can be...

Someone having done something hurtful (e.g. saying "That's retarded"); accounting for it by understanding how it has hurt someone (e.g. "that was a poor word choice..."); acknowledging why it was hurtful (e.g. "...some people have Downs Syndrome and using that word as an insult negates their experiences as humans."); doing something about it (e.g. "I could have said 'that's ridiculous' instead."); and, ultimately, transforming oppressive behaviours (e.g. "In the future, I'm going to much more conscious of my word choices.").

### **ENDNOTES:**

For Your Enhanced Letter-Reading Experience. These are the End Notes from a letter created to engage with and mobilize our community (nonconformists, activists and anarchists in Hamilton) around issues of Intimate Violence.

- 1. Specifically, "partner" can refer to any person in an "intimate" relationship (sexual or otherwise close friends of any gender who share a tight bond, close friends of different genders who don't have sex, close friends of different genders who do have sex...etc.). The term "intimate relationship" usually refers to people who consider themselves "partners" of each other, but not always.
- 2. Privilege What the Heck's That All About?? In her article "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" Peggy McIntosh writes about her experience as a white, anti-racist ally, working in an academic setting. She introduces and demonstrates the parallels that exist between behaviors that are racist and

behaviors that are sexist. She then goes on to create a list of her own privileges as a white human. Following this, she provides a good breakdown of the concept of "privilege":

"We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work to systematically over-empower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance because of one's race or sex.

I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred systematically. Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Other [privileges], like the privilege to ignore less-powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders [of privilege] as well as the ignored groups.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages (which we can work to spread), and negative types of advantages which, unless rejected, will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as a privilege for a few. Ideally it is an unearned entitlement. At present, since only a few have it, it is an unearned advantage for them. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the power which I originally saw as attendant on being a human being in the U.S. consisted in unearned advantage and conferred dominance."

So, to Translate: "Privilege" is kinda like a merit system -- the more unearned advantages a person has, the more privileged they likely are.

Consequently, the more "unearned disadvantages" (lack of privilege) a person

has, the more susceptible they may be to resultant oppressions. Having more privilege allows someone the greater advantage of being less likely to experience or understand oppression."

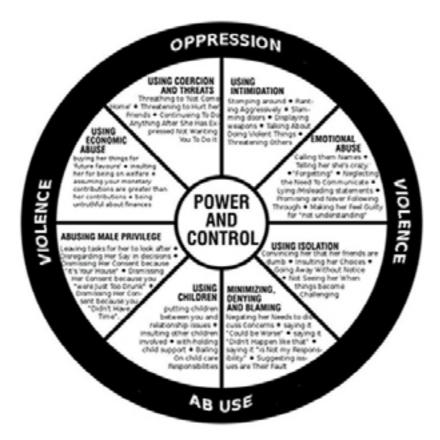
Try it this way: Think of someone who has had a position of power or control in your own life – e.g. your boss, ex-boss, really terrible ex-partner of some kind. Got a good one in mind? Now, try to think of some advantages they may have had over you – More money than you? More academically trained? More well-loved or admired?

Now, ask yourself: How did they get to have more money? How much help did they have from financially inclined relatives? Are they just as well-trained as you, but happen to have a different gender, or different skin colour? Etc.

At this point, it starts to become more clear: Let's say your ex-partner was much more financially stable than you because their relatives were able to offer them money to help them out. This is an unearned advantage. Your ex-partner did not themselves earn the advantage of having financially stable relatives who could help them out. This advantage occurred by their luck. Likewise, so did their gender and race.

There are endless ways to measure and count unearned advantages. Essentially, they amount to countless subtle inequalities. Conferred dominance is what happens when someone has so much more advantage than another person, that they are able to "take the lead" without question. In order to break down hierarchies that create these dominances, we must question our privileges and challenge our reliance on them.

- 3. Modified Wheel of Power and Control!
- 4. "In cases reported to the police, eighty percent ten percent were assaulted by a friend and forty-one percent were assaulted by an acquaintance. Twenty-



eight percent were assaulted by a family member, while the remaining twenty percent were assaulted by a stranger." (Statistics Canada, 2003. The Daily, 23rd July); "eighty percent of sexual assault incidents occur in the home" (A Statistical Representation of the Truth 2011, from www.sexassault.ca)

5. Concerning Taboos: Oftentimes, it is hard to think about privilege and inequalities because it is depressing. Talking about it is probably not going to come easy if we have decided we "just don't want to think about it."

When we choose these methods of coping with oppression – not thinking or not talking about it – we enter into a state of denial. If we are not addressing problems, we are neglecting them. Once we've been in denial for long enough, tough topics like Intimate Violence become taboo.

By not talking about it, not thinking about it, and ultimately not dealing with it, we finish the work that systems of structural violence (e.g. capitalism) started. Taboos (or having guilt or shame in talking about something) serve to protect those in power. (McIntosh's article "White Privilege" elaborates a bit on this.)

6. From Community Accountability within Progressive Movements:

What can victim-blaming look like? Calling the people raising the issue of gender abuse, oppression or violence bourgeois, middle class white feminist, dividing the movement, destroying unity, lynching, taking us away from the real or serious work, a race/class/nation enemy

Blaming [people] who raise the issue of gender oppression, abuse or violence as deserving it, a flirt, young, wants attention, must have done something wrong, a slut, man-hater, a lesbian/dyke, making a power play

Blaming [people] who take a stand against gender oppression as bitches, controlling, angry, man-haters,lesbians/dykes, or white feminists.

Turning abusers into victims by naming people accused of sexist, abusive, or violent attitudes and behavior as

victims, nice guys, heroes, important to our work (more important than the [people] raising the issues, or than survivors of abuse)

INCITE! Women of Color. (July, 2005). Community Accountability within the People of Color Progressive Movement. Retrieved from www.incite-national.org/index.php?s=94, February 2011.

- 7. A survivor must reclaim empowerment by making choices about their own needs without the judgment calls of other people: other people are not as aware of the survivor's needs as the survivor is.
- 8. Again, taboos and tensions are oftentimes born of denial and an inability to effectually address conflict or create restitutions. These taboos do not exist because the survivor made them so, and thus require the collective responsibility of a community in order for taboos and tensions to eventually dissipate.
- 9. From Community Accountability within Progressive Movements: What can counter-organizing look like?
  - Harassing, demeaning, denouncing, gossiping about, spreading rumors and lies about or threatening to do these things to [people] who raise the issue of gender oppression either as survivors or as allies
  - Demoting, firing or threatening to demote or fire [people] who raise the issue of gender oppression either as survivors or as allies
  - Isolating or discrediting persons who raise concerns and/or call for accountability
  - Questioning the legitimacy of concerns to detract from the need to be accountable
  - Questioning the legitimacy of the accountability process to detract from the need to be accountable

- Accusing others of abuse in order to call attention away from own accountability
- Denying, minimizing, victimblaming, and plain-old lying about doing any of these things when called on it

(INCITE! Women of Color, 2005).

Each of these examples are certain ways in which a person (or group of people) acts to avoid responsibility for their actions and behaviours. These actions not only serve to negate responsibility for shitty behaviours, but also serve to further isolate, dismiss or dis-empower people who have experienced any kind of violence.

- 10. Let's Talk About How This Recreates Dynamics of Intimate Violence: By continuing to neglect and disrespect needs and boundaries (of the survivor, and/or supportive community members), perpetrators of abuse (or other people who are being negligent or oppressive in their behaviors, including folks we might not consider to be 'abusive' or 'perpetrators', but who repeatedly do hurtful things to others) maintain an unequal amount of power and control. Any violation of boundaries creates inequality.
- 11. Effectively, this can come off as neutrality and apathy. The general lack of support that is fostered by these inconsistencies allows for a continuance of the perpetrator's oppressive behaviors.

# 12. Ways To Reflect:

What are the ways in which we, as conscientious/activist/anti-authoritarian individuals are oppressed or marginalized?

What connections between the violence we have been socialized with (e.g. name-calling) and more subtle forms of violence (e.g. gender essentialising assumptions like "boys like cars") can you make? How do the subtle oppressions we experience intersect and mirror intimate violence?

What are some examples of violence that are less glorified or magnified as physical assault?

### 13. Resources:

- · www.allystoolkit.tumblr.com
- The Revolution Starts at Home (book)
- · Anarchist Accountability (zine)
- "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" (article) by Peggy McIntosh

14. Very important – never assume you know what you're talking about because you've merely read this one thing, or a zine, or heard a radio show or went to a workshop. There is a lot to learn and understand better... And eventually, you will better know what you are talking about.

15. Kelly, E. L., Peters-Golden, J. (N.D.) Philly Stands Up Portrait of Praxis: An Anatomy of Accountability. Retrieved via email, July, 2011.

See here for more: www.portlytruestories.blogspot.com/2007/11/how-to-fuck-up.html

### **EXTRAS**

Characteristics of a Healthy Relationship

- You have fun
- · You are loved unconditionally
- You are willing to work through conflicts
- · You receive encouragement for your abilities
- · Cooperation occurs
- You are respected
- · Anger is expressed safely
- Feelings are respected and talked about
- · There is willingness to negotiate
- You have power despite your age or ability or gender or race or class or beliefs
- You are treated as an Equal

- Your small accomplishments are noted and celebrated
- · It is okay to make mistakes
- You can freely say "I was wrong"
- You are really listened to
- · Resources are shared Equally
- There is affection and warmth, but never intrusion (e.g. of boundaries)
- · Your privacy is respected
- Your mealtimes are calm and enjoyable
- · Your differences are respected and encouraged
- · You can be silly
- · You are honest with each other

# HOW TO TALK TO SOMEONE WHO IS ABUSIVE... ...OR OTHERWISE ACTING OPPRESSIVELY:

Everyone in the community has a role to play in preventing abuse and/or oppression. You may suspect abuse is happening to a neighbour, friend, family member or co-worker, but don't know what to do or how to talk about it. You may worry about making the situation worse.

Sometimes, people around someone who has been behaving oppressively/ abusively overlook their behavior, and only focus on supporting the person who has been abused. At other times, people may sympathize with whoever is acting oppressively. This may inadvertently escalate abuse.

Talking to someone who is acting oppressively is integral to preventing abuse, and needs to be done with care. Oppression and abuse will not 'go away' on its own.

Here's what you can do: Choose the right time and place for having a full discussion (somewhere neutral where you are both comfortable and free from distractions).

Approach them when you are both calm.

- Be direct and clear about what you have seen or observed, or believe to have happened.
- Tell them that their behavior is their own responsibility. Avoid making judgmental comments about them as a person. Do not validate their attempts to blame others for their behavior.
- Inform them that their behavior must stop.
- Do not try to force them to change or seek help.
- Make it very clear that you are concerned about the well-being or safety of their partner/your friend/ your co-workers/their children.
- Never argue with them about their abusive actions. Recognize that confrontational, argumentative approaches may be antagonizing, and could escalate oppression or abuse. Be calm and collected.
- If these things are absolutely impossible or have been ineffective, try to support their partner/ your friend/your co-worker in subtle ways (directing them to community resources).
- If the Person Acting Oppressively/ Abusively Denies Abuse:
- People who are oppressive or abusive will often minimize the impact, and/or deny that they have done anything wrong. They may state that it isn't that bad, or engage in victim-blaming. This type of behaviour deflects their own responsibility for their actions.
- Keep your conversation focused on your concerns for your friend/their partner/your co-worker's wellbeing. Reiterate that oppression and abuse is never acceptable.
- Keep the lines of communication open and look for opportunities to help them to also find support.



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**Two Really Supportive Herbs** 

By Shabina

decided to write a piece about herbs because I find that whenever I can't take care of myself or am going nuts, they help me so much. I thought I ought to share some tricks that have helped me over the years for the Support Issue.

Before we get started I wanted to mention that when harvesting plants it's important to only harvest one plant for every fifteen plants around you. Please remember that we need to help these plants survive when using them.

#### **MOTHERWORT**

Motherwort is amazing! This herb has helped me so much through hard times.

I have used Motherwort as an anti-depressant and as a relaxant when I was feeling anxious many times. It is used in western herbalism as an anti-depressant, an anti-convulsant, a cardiac, a relaxant, etc... I drink it as a tea and as soon as I finish my cup I feel eight million times more okay. Generally, it has helped me calm down and be able to think about things in a more grounded way.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine issues of insomnia, fatigue and depression can be linked back to your liver. These are all thing I have had at different times in my life and if there's one thing I have learned, it is that Motherwrot is amazing for these issues. It works because Motherwort is a bitter herb, and bitter herbs stimulate the production of bile in your liver which helps promote a healthy digestive system. And so, I recommend trying it out if you're having irregular sleep, shitty digestion or are feeling bummed in general.

Motherwort is also an great herb to use for PMS (pre-menstrual syndrome) and menstrual cramps. It is a uterine tonic as well as a uterine relaxant. There's nothing like drinking a cup of the tea and being able to go on with my day.

This plant grows EVERYWHERE in Guelph. Usually I find it in transition areas. This means that I find it in the space between a field or a path and a woodsy area. The leaves change shape over the season so make sure you remember what the younger and the older leaves look like. I harvest the top two inches of this plant before it has gone to flower (spiky little round things), but you can also harvest the flowers if you want. Test it out and see if you like drinking the tea with the flowers or not!

Once again, advantage of only using the top part is that it is the most medicinal and it is less harmful to the plant because it is still able to continue to grow and produce seeds for next years patch.

Motherwort is not recommended in pregnant women, except during the last two weeks of pregnancy, and should be used with caution by people with hyperthyroid or if they are taking oral contraceptives, cardioactive, bloodpressure, thyroid, anti-convulsant, sedative, or mood-altering medications. If these things do not apply to you, then it is a very safe herb to use regularly.

Photo: Motherwort



Photo: Stinging Nettle

#### STINGING NETTLE

Stinging nettle can be found along the river in Guelph in large patches. They generally grow up to about 5-6 feet. Be careful though! The name isn't a bluff. This plant will definitely sting you if you are not careful. I recommend wearing gloves if you don't want to get stung. But, if you're like me, you kind of like being stung and don't care. To harvest them I cut off the top two to three inches of the plant. Make sure you harvest the plant before it goes to seed.

## Careful of Stings!

The advantage of only using the top part is that it is the tenderest part of the plant, the most medicinal and it is less harmful to the plant because it is still able to continue to grow and produce seeds for next years patch.

I like to cook this herb in the summer (don't worry, the sting disappears when it's cooked). It's delicious and can be fried in butter, made into a pesto, added to a dish, steamed, drank as a tea, etc... It can also be used as a substitute for spinach or kale. A favourite recipe of mine is making tea out of the herb and adding a few spice to it with a bit of miso. And, most importantly it's free and so good for you.

Nettles have definitely prevented me from starving many times. When cooked they are rich in vitamins A, C, iron, potassium, manganese, and calcium. They are also really high in protein. The tea has a large range of medicinal properties. It is a lymphatic, an immune stimulant, an antioxidant, an anxiolytic, and a depurative just to name a few.

Another amazing thing about nettle is that when I rub the fresh plant on my mosquito bites, they stop itching. I think this has to do with the stinging aspect of the plant because when you get stung, blood circulates much faster in that part of the body. So, I'm imagining that it flushes away whatever the heck that mosquito injected into you.

As a tea, it should be avoided by pregnant women. Furthermore, lactating women should not be drinking the tea regularly. But, it's totally cool for everyone to eat it as food. If the prior sentence doesn't apply to you consume as much of it as you want!

## **Two Questions For Cindy Crabb**

#### by Danielle Gehl

In addition to penning the longrunning zine *Doris*, Cindy Crabb is an organizer, artist and musician.

Check out her book The Encyclopedia of Doris, which is an excellent resource for self-reflection and inspiration. From sexual abuse to punk, to ponies, Cindy tackles the tough shit and the fun shit with rare courage, care, and humility. She was one of the first writers I read who made it okay for unlearning the lessons of the dominant culture to be a long, sometimes arduous process-- a cycle of falling down and getting up again, a slow marinating in this culture of challenging and questioning that we as anarchists are trying to create. Cindy is also not afraid to use the word love, and that is a big deal. She was kind enough to let me pick her brain over email.

In your writing, you talk really openly and honestly about love, something that we as a culture (and even as radicals) have difficulty with. Something I'm interested in is developing a vocabulary to empower us to say what we mean when we talk about intimacy, friendship and love. Can you tell me a bit about what talking about love looks like in your community?

I haven't found very many good examples of love, in any of the communities that I consider myself part of, radical or

> otherwise. I don't think it's for lack of trying. Most people I have know want care and respect,

> > closeness, safety, understanding,

passion, growth,

and to be drawn into a better self. Most people however, were raised by families that did not set good examples of love; families that were abusive or neglectful or self-absorbed or misattuned. And no matter how we try to escape the failures of our parents or families, we end up repeating behaviours – even if they are not the same behavior,

they are in some sense in reaction to the ways we were brought up -by our parents or caretakers and by the society around us. It's a generational problem, an ancestral problem.

One of the things that drew me to anarchist politics was its understanding of hierarchy and domination; that our personal problems and neurosis were part of a larger social neurosis caused by the dehumanization that individuals experience because our social structures are based on domination.

The anarchist philosophers I loved talked about the history of revolutions - how the replacing of one system of government with another always led to abuse of power. For anarchism to work, we must not place the ends before the means. We must create the kinds of groups and organizations that we wish to see in a new world. This means the groups and organizations must be committed to dismantling sexism, racism, and all forms of domination inside their groups as well as in the larger world. It means that groups must be committed to caring for each others personal and political growth, not at the expense of political action, but along with it. It must be a politic of love. To me, this seemed true, and it was the way I wanted to be in the world. I did not want to be part of a social movement that was cruel.

Unfortunately, many groups I found did not consider this important. There is a very strong, martyristic belief that we have to do what needs to get done, and there is no time for care. Most political groups that have followed these lines tend to be dominated by men, and the groups do not last, or if they do last, they are mostly run by one or two strong, domineering individuals, and populated by a revolving



door of people who are somewhat cowed and silenced by these individuals, but do what the leaders say and tow the line. I don't consider this anarchism.

The groups I have been involved with that lasted and felt like they made lasting

impacts on their communities have been groups where the people involved were interested in everyone's ideas, and acknowledged that some people are more able to speak up than others and so were committed to a "step forward/step back" philosophy, which means that people who generally had a lot to say would be conscious of how much space they were taking up, and they would be aware of the need to sometimes shut the fuck up, and people who felt less empowered to speak took the responsibility to risk speaking. Because these groups cared about each other, even if they didn't always get along, it worked to do this and added to the efficiency of the group rather than detracting from it. Also these groups worked to create actions and projects that reflected the needs of the community and that took community critique seriously, without getting defensive.

We can not dismantle oppression and hierarchy in the world unless we are also committed to dismantling it in our lives. It is silly to think we can find it in a vacuum. The self-help movement popularized the idea that you can not find love unless you love yourself first. It is not true. We are social creatures, and we form our self-understanding by what we see around us. We can not create self-love unless we have experienced love. We can not create a thriving anarchist movement unless our movement is committed to caring about whether or not our friends and comrades are thriving. Bell hooks, one of the bravest and most influential feminist writers of our time, has written a few really good books about love. She says that it is important to define love so that we can better understand what we need to do to work towards love. She says that abuse and neglect can not exist within a context of love. In the book All About Love, she quotes, love is "the will to extend oneself for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." Now, I don't relate to spirituality exactly, but

I know what she means, and I bet most people do.

Something that comes up a lot in conversations I have with friends about support is how giving care is often undervalued, even in activist circles. It's seen as mushy, or feminine. The work of giving care often falls to women, which reifies its role as less important, less revolutionary. has this been your experience? How do you counter the tendency to undervalue support?

I have actually seen activist circles be particularly bad at valuing care. Most other, non political communities I have been part of are much better at supporting each other. One good example of a political group that did well with care and activism was ACTUP! (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) which fought on many fronts - working for gay liberation and the liberation of all people - total social transformation – and also working within the system for many things, such as access to AIDS drugs and for non-discrimination policies in hospitals and work places, while at the same time organizing caregiving for the thousands of gay men dying of AIDS.

Many women of all races have fought very hard to deal with the ways sexism has affected their lives, working to deal with internalized sexism and the sexism they face on a daily basis, and working on multitudes of political levels.

Many gay, queer, transgender and intersex people have fought hard to challenge gender constructs and homophobia, internally and politically, and they also fight on a daily basis.

It is time for straight men to step forward and do the difficult work to confront the many ways they have internalized sexism, both as individuals and as dominant social groups – looking at the ways they exhibit sexist behaviour and also at the ways sexism and the construct of masculinity has negatively affected them and their organizing strategies. They need to examine the

social programming that teaches many of them not to exhibit care, not to offer care to each other, and to seek women as sole care providers. They need to create writing and study groups that discuss the political necessity of changing the stifling construct of masculinity, within our society and within themselves and our communities. While involved in this important work of personal and political transformation, they need to share their thoughts and experiences of what they do to challenge and change their own sexist behaviours and sexist self-understanding with the larger world, so that others can learn from their examples.

For a start, I recommend reading the book by bell hooks, The Will to Change. I recommend this book both for men who want to understand the political necessity of change, and also for anyone who cares about men changing.

I personally counter the tendency to undervalue support in activist communities by acknowledging that activist communities tend to not be very supportive places. I look for personal and political support elsewhere. At the same time I work to make the activist groups I am part of more aware of the ways domination and oppression play out within our group, and to create groups that simply don't want to be like that.

...groups must be committed to caring for each others personal and political growth, not at the expense of political action, but along with it.

Most groups are way more fun to be part of when people care about undoing oppression and want to support each other in finding our power and voice, and when we genuinely care about each others ideas and opinions, and are willing and wanting to find new solutions.

## How to Be a Good Friend to Crazyfolk

#### by Maranda Elizabeth

'm crazy. And I'm okay with that.

I'm learning how to live as a crazy

person, how to take care of myself,

and I'm learning what I want and need in various friendships and relationships. There are so many aspects of my craziness that I need to share (and some I'd rather keep to myself), and it's important for us - crazyfolk, and our allies and pals and potential friends - to have meaningful discussions, to have compassion and understanding, and to be open to all these things and more. I also think that those of us with mental health conditions need to seek out one another, befriend one another, get together and strategize/ organize. How do we take care of ourselves? How do we take care of one another? Are there times when we need to admit that we are not always capable of those things? Support is a really big word. And it's different for all of us. I'm writing as someone who has been diagnosed with depression,

anxiety, borderline personality disorder, and chronic pain, among other things, and I'm writing as someone who grew up in and continues to live in poverty. I'm also writing as a queer, an introvert, and someone whose life has been consistently inconsistent. So that's where I'm coming from, that's part of my history. What I've written isn't going to be true for everyone, but it's what I know for myself, and I hope it will help you navigate your own conditions and boundaries, and those of your friends as well. I hope it will open discussions and I hope it will inspire you.

I'm going to begin with ideas on how to support us while we are in the hospital, and then move on to how to support us in our daily lives. And then I'll provide some self-care tips for crazyfolk as well.

#### WHEN WE'RE IN THE HOSPITAL

Last Spring, I was in Homewood for two months, participating in a treatment program for those with depression and anxiety. Homewood is a treatment centre in Guelph with various inpatient and outpatient programs for people with mental health conditions, addictions, eating disorders, and so on. It's been around for more than one hundred years. Although I've always been aware that treatment is, unfortunately, a privilege, not a right, I really had that drilled into me after I was referred to their depression and anxiety program. My first suicide

attempt was in November 2007. I spent a few days at Guelph General Hospital having my stomach pumped, regaining consciousness, and talking to various nurses, counsellors, and psychiatrists. From there, I was moved across the street to Homewood Health Centre, where I was admitted to inpatient for one week. I was added to the wait list for IMAP (Integrated Mood and Anxiety Program), and told that, since I didn't have money or insurance, the wait list would be quite long; maybe three to six months. I needed help immediately, and I freaked out. Instead, the wait list turned out to be four and a half years. In the meantime, I fell apart a few times, put some of the pieces back together, and learned a hell of a lot. Nine months after being discharged, my life continues to be in a wonderful, adventurous state of transition, and my learning processes and self-care processes continue to develop. That's where I'm at right now.

## HOW CAN WE SUPPORT OUR FRIENDS WHEN THEY/WE ARE IN THE HOSPITAL?

1. Ask if we'd like visitors! And if we say yes, show up! When I was in Homewood, almost nobody visited me. A few people talked about visiting, asked about visiting hours, sent well wishes, but when it came right down to it, they did not show up. That's not useful; it's disappointing. You don't need to be afraid of making plans with us, of coming onto hospital grounds, of hanging out. We are still human! We can still have conversations, we can sit down and drink coffee together, talk about our days, share stories, and it doesn't have to be this weird, awkward thing. If you think it is, that's your problem, not ours. Investigate those feelings. Talk about them. Get rid of them.

2. If you're comfortable with visiting, please also understand that we will have days when we don't want to see anyone.

Don't take it personally. Our days are mostly spent talking about difficult things. When I was in Homewood, a lot of my time and energy were spent on anger, depression, confusion, rage, and regret. Many of my conversations revolved around depression, anxiety, abuse, self-harm, trauma, and so on. By the end of the day, I was exhausted. I sat in my bed reading, journaling, napping, or daydreaming. The majority of our days on inpatient are spent in group therapy settings, and, for me, carving alone-time in each day was absolutely crucial.

3. Don't forget we exist! Maybe we can't participate in everything that's happening on the outside, but we are still here. We probably miss you, but we need to take a break and take care of ourselves right now. Please don't create unnecessary distances between us, or treat us like we are somehow different than we used to be. I don't want to feel like a total freak when I come back to my supposed supportive communities (at least not anymore than I already do!).

4. Remember that these lists can and will change for different people at different times. The best you can do is ask us where we're at, ask us if we'd like visitors, ask us if we want to talk about our mental health or anything but our mental health. Ask if you can share stories from your own life on the outside as well; we still care!

Ifeel like I would have had more visitors if I had been at the Regular Hospital instead of the Mental Hospital. Mental health conditions are obviously treated different than physical health conditions and injuries and whatnot, and while in some situations, that makes sense, I think that when we are in an institution where we are isolated from our friends and our communities and the routines of our daily lives, we need support and comfort no matter what the reasons are for us being there. If your friend was confined to a

hospital bed because they'd broken their leg, you'd probably visit, and you probably wouldn't pretend that the cast on their leg was invisible. So if your friend is in the hospital because they're being treated for a mental health condition, visit. Talk to them. Don't pretend it isn't happening.

#### WHEN WE'RE AT HOME

For those of us dealing with mental health conditions, and many others as well, communication can be really hard. I am shy. I find it difficult to initiate plans and conversations with my friends, though I am trying and I feel like I am getting better at it. Sometimes it's easier for me to hide behind my computer screen and talk to you on the internet, or to write a zine and photocopy it and hand it to you, than it is for me to simply call you up and invite you over. I also have a difficult time making plans because my moods change rapidly and unpredictably, so I might make plans when I'm feeling super-pumped about life, then wake up the day of our get-together and feel pretty much unable to get out of bed. I don't like cancelling plans, but sometimes it's necessary. I'm learning what kinds of communications and conversations I need in my daily life, and I want to help others learn about their own needs and boundaries as well. I want to share these things, talk about these things, develop awareness about our various kinds of so-called crazy.

#### HOW CAN WE SUPPORT OUR FRIENDS IN OUR DAILY LIVES?

1. Come visit, or invite us over to your place! I am not always comfortable in crowded places, and I'm usually broke, so while I do enjoy going out from time to time, it's not something I like to do overly often, and I am usually too broke anyway. I like meeting up and hanging out at cafés, but can't always afford a cup of coffee, so I'd rather just hang around

at my place or yours, drink coffee or tea, and have good talks. You don't need to worry about keeping me entertained or being the most interesting person in the world, and hopefully neither do I. I'm into cheap hangouts and good conversations, but then again, I've never turned down a trip to the bookstore either.

- 2. On a broke-related note: Disability! I'm on disability, and so are many other folks with mental health conditions and/ or chronic pain. Please don't judge us for a) where our income comes from, or b) what we choose to do with it. ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) is well-known for not providing a reasonable living wage. So I can't always go out and spend a lot of money, see all the shows I want to see and buy all the records I want to listen to and all the books I want to read and eat out at restaurants all the time and buy a latté everyday. So please don't expect me to. Let's hang out without feeling pressured to spend money!
- 3. Please respect our boundaries. For example, I often need to go to bed early because I take meds that make me tired and make me require more sleep than the average person to function in my daily life, and I also have histories of insomnia and mania, so encouraging me to stay up all night is not always a fantastic idea. I do like to stay up late sometimes, and I miss my past night-owl-ism now and then, but it's best for my mental and physical health if I try to maintain a fairly regular sleep schedule. Similarly, I require quite a bit of alone-time to recover from social situations, and I also require quiet-time and one-on-one time with my pals in general, so please respect that.
- 4. Listen to our stories. Don't imply that we are Too Crazy or Not Crazy Enough. Both of these responses are incredibly invalidating and judgemental. Treat us with respect and compassion and care.

- 5. Don't take the effects of our treatments personally. For example, a lot of the meds I've been on over the years have caused memory loss. I am not good at remembering names, sometimes I ask questions that were just answered five minutes ago, sometimes I forget the plans we just confirmed, and sometimes I am simply very scatter-brained or very groggy and blurry. It's got nothing to do with you, just my weird moods and the chemicals in my body and my brain and my thoughts moving too rapidly to catch up with.
- 6. Ask us what's going on in our lives, ask us how we're feeling today. Ask us if we'd like a hug!
- 7. Do not give us unsolicited advice! It's annoying and condescending. While I am totally open to listening to your stories and discussing what has helped you or what has helped your friends and family, I am absolutely not okay with the assumption that those are the things that are going to help me, too. I've tried many treatments; some have been helpful, some have not. Some of the treatments I'd like to try are entirely inaccessible to me due to my low income and lack of coverage. I don't like being recommended treatments that cost money; that goes for various therapies and "alternative" treatments, as well as diets, vitamins, and supplements as well. If I could try them, I would, but that's not where I'm at right now. If your next sentence begins with, "You should...", then maybe just keep it to yourself, please and thank you. (But if I ask you for advice, hopefully you'll be willing to share!)
- 8. Say and do things that let us know you value our friendship.
- 9. Discuss these lists with your pals. Talk about what you'd add, what you'd take away. Write your own lists. Share them.

#### NOTES ABOUT SELF-CARE FOR CRAZYFOLK (AND EVERYONE ELSE)

Self-care is the most important of all! I can't stay sane or functional if I'm not making efforts to take good care of myself. Self-care means so many things to so many people, and it can change and evolve everyday. For example, sometimes I take care of myself by recognizing when I need alone-time, and staying home. Other times, I take care of myself by recognizing that I am using alone-time as a way of hibernating and isolating, so I instead force myself to go outside, or make plans with friends.

The following is a small list of some of my methods of self-care. The trick is not only to recognize when you need to devote some time and effort to taking care of yourself, but to actually do it instead of just thinking about it, writing lists, procrastinating, etc. It took me a long time to figure that out, and I feel like I am re-learning it everyday.

#### **IDEAS FOR PROVIDING SELF-CARE**

- 1. Write it down: journals, fiction, zines, letters, whatever, I need to write to get stuff out of my system, and sometimes I communicate better through writing than talking.
- 2. Turn off all technology: internet, radio, music, cell phones... Give yourself a break from life by creating a silent, calm atmosphere.
- 3. Keep up your basic daily self-care rituals, like having a shower, brushing your teeth, eating a decent breakfast, even if you're not planning on leaving the house.
- 4. If you have animal companions, take time to snuggle with them and talk to them.

- 5. Slow down. When I am rushing through my activities and my days, I start to feel really crazy and jittery and like I'm constantly running out of time. When I make the effort to simply walk slower, prepare my food slower, focus on one thing at a time, I feel more calm and safe in my own body.
- 6. If you are doing things that are harmful to your psyche or your body, ask yourself why. Ask yourself what you are trying to accomplish, what feelings you would like to be experiencing, and then search for less harmful ways to find those things.
- 7. If you need to get out of the house, but don't want to talk to anyone, go to the library. I like wandering the aisles and seeing what catches my eye, and I feel really great when I come home with my backpack filled with free books.
- 8. Declare a Self-Care Day! I do this sometimes when I really need to. A Self-Care Day means I get to do whatever I want all day long - within reason - and I don't allow myself to feel guilty about not running important errands, or cancelling plans so I can stay home, or ignoring my to-do list in order to drink lots of coffee and make art, or whatever. Self-Care Days, for me, usually involve staying home, daydreaming, working on writing projects, not bothering to respond to emails and whatnot, reflecting on the state of my life in my paper journal, and burning yummy-smelling candles. I especially like to declare Self-Care Days on what I call Bad Anniversaries - certain dates that roll around each year and make you feel bad because something terrible happened that day however many years ago. Those are the days that I really need to be aware and take care of myself. Your Self-Care Days might look way, way different from mine, and that is absolutely okay. Do whatever you need to do to keep yourself alive.

These lists could go on forever, and they will vary and warp and change and grow for each person. I highly encourage you to try out some of the things on these lists, to write your own lists, and to discuss them with your friends and family. It takes an incredible amount of time and energy to figure out what you want and need, and it takes even more effort and guts to share these things with people in your life. It's gonna be hard, but it's also gonna be wonderful.



Contact: schoolformaps@gmail.com marandaelizabeth.com

# by A. Newt What Lies Beneath The Word

hen I say inequality is an internalized idea, I mean that it has been communicated so many times we have accepted its prevalence in society. Inequality is a common reality; many blatant examples of it go unnoticed by us each day. This is problematic because when something fails to get noticed, people soon lose interest. They become indifferent to these systemic issues.

The language used in societal circumstances reflects the individual's attitude and perceived opinion of which he/she is speaking of. Specifically, in military warfare, a human being is referred to as a combatant or an insurgent. This manifests in the ability of soldiers to disassociate from the pain they inflict primarily because they no longer see a person, but an enemy.

Emotional withdrawal has become the coping mechanism of an unequal society. This escape from reality is often easier to manage than the heartache felt when thinking about the conditions of others. Words further the creation of vivid images in our minds. For example, when I think of a pig I remember the movie 'Babe' with cute, little piglets running around. But the term swine brings to mind a big, dirty, smelly beast. Both words contextualize the same animal, but they invoke very different pictures in our heads.

This same paradigm can be found in a biology classroom. When students

perform tests or terminal surgeries on animals it is often necessary to rationalize killing for the pursuit of science. A test dog or rat cannot be characterized with feelings one attributes to a pet because no one wants to dissect something they feel connected to.

Before we rationalize or make assumptions about something, we should ask ourselves; would I feel differently about this if it were happening to me? It is this inner questioning to see our self in another that allows for personal growth.

What assumptions are inherently found when speaking about people in other regions of the world. When I make reference to the "third world" what have I self-implied extreme poverty and a lack of basic necessities? Furthermore what do I associate the middle east with; violence and political turmoil? How can these generalizations speak to the way in which we view our own society? Are we different, do we share common themes; do the problems 'over there' have anything to do with us here in Canada?

The excuse that violence oversees has nothing to do with us is a cowardly opinion. We have a responsibility to denounce and reject the Canadian government and companies that carry out human rights violations here and on foreign soil. It is ridiculous so many of these atrocities are ignored oversees and few are openly criticized when they occur on our shores. Our actions stem from

personal values and if we are opposed to something we cannot remain indifferent. Society perpetuates these circumstances by our silence; passively ignoring them is not going to stop it-- it is only going to further discrimination, pain and suffering.

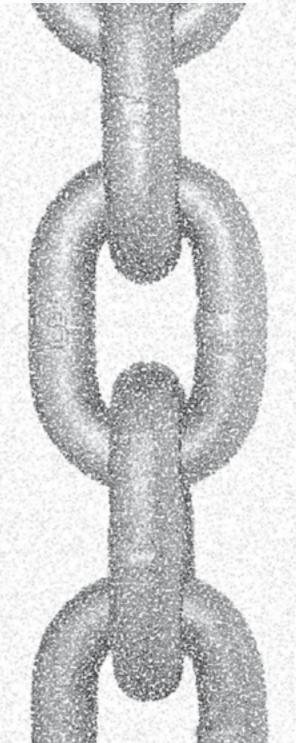
We have grown up in a society that has told us in order to succeed we have to be the best, often at someone else's expense. In sports, school and at work, those who hold authority have pitted us against our friends, our peers and people in other countries. Instead of viewing people as competition, we should look at what they are fighting for and find connections to our own struggle. Borders do not differentiate people; they do not judge the spirit of another human and they cannot contain our collective fight for dignity and a free life.

Some people may believe that the world is beyond repair and that caring about others is not going to make a difference. I don't agree with this--I believe human alienation is a product of global capitalist ideology. If we recognize this inherent polarization, we can take the steps to undo and halt this attitude.

At the source, all life is helped along by another. All ecosystems are connected through a web of living elements that flourish together or fall one by one. When something in our home is broken, many do not rely on our own intuition, creativity or neighbours to help us. We call a maintenance worker, go to the department store, or buy a new one. We often neglect to look or ask those around us because we fear the unknown. It's a beautiful thing when you can find the help you need down the street instead of a twenty minute drive away. It is the beginning of a relationship with those around you, because, sharing and borrowing are acts of genuine reciprocity.

If we want to build a new society where equality is really practiced we have to destroy this mirage of democracy. We have to start again from scratch. Each of us together, armed with our bodies, minds and unshakable values can knock down the strongest fortress. Our mutual support is our glue and ammo.

Growth comes from inside, from practicing and developing a voice and acting on that vocalization. We must listen and foster opportunities to assist in the transfer of thoughts into reality. We shouldn't be afraid to say I don't understand because when we ask and critically analyze – we all learn.



This time on Burn Pile all reviews are on the theme of support, the Arrow Archive has a large collection of zines on this theme. These zines contain information on a variety of wellness topics such as wild herb collection for natural healing, quitting drinking, and grief. Below are reviews of a few of these zines. All zines reviewed here can be found at the Arrow Archive zine library in UC 107, which is also the home to GRCGED (Guelph Resource Centre for Gender Empowerment and Diversity). To find these titles in the collection refer to the last line of the review (AA location) which will tell you which box to look in to find the zine you are looking for. So stop by and say hello to the folks at GRCGED and check out the zine library. Happy zine reading!



## Support

Cindy Crabb asked friends, peers, and other zinesters to contribute to a zine about supporting folks who have been sexually abused. Offering no formulas, no simple answers, this zine is successful in bringing otherwise buried emotions to the surface, helping folks move though a healing process. Support also a introduction in a manner of speaking to the events that can lead to and the emotions felt by folks who have been sexually abused. Trigger warning.

half letter, 64 pgs AA location: Mental Wellness

#### The Worst #2

Compilation zine on grief and loss

The second issue of this great zine about grief and loss. This is a compilation zine, meaning that many folks have writings therein, but I like to call it a contemplation zine. It includes writings about death of loved ones, grandfathers, mothers, lovers, friends, sisters and brothers. Stories are short and touching, deeply emotional and soul bearing. If you have ever lost someone or want to support someone who has, this zine is for you. Trigger warning.



half letter, 64 pgs

AA location: Mental Wellness

#### Social Detox #1

Resources for Anti-sexist men

Great resource for male bodied folks to learn about sexism and how to concur it. Easy to read cut and paste type zine with short article and lists to help with the work of transforming social relationships between folks. Gives definitions and answers to simple questions about consent, patriarchy, masculinity, and so on from a anarchist perspective. Great zine for those folks that are curious about the topic.

half letter, 24 pgs

AA location: Mental Wellness



## The Long Walk Back to Myself

By Jessica Max Stein

Jessica took a long walk. More importantly Jessica took a long walk to think. Then she made a zine about it to tell the story and raise awareness of the simplicity and importance of walking. Her trek took her four days to get to her destination, a music festival about 50 miles (about 80k) from her home. The author explains that walking, like sleeping, can be a healing activity. Usually done alone it can be a place to find ones center and process emotions, thoughts, and even to meditate. Contact: gaymuppeteer@gmail.com

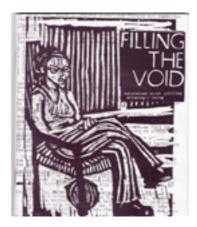
half legal, 41 pgs

## **Telegram Ma'am: Stealing Lilacs**

Maranda, avid zinester from Guelph tells us of their experience at Homewood. For all you kittens who don't know Homewood Health Centre is a treatment center for mental health and addiction. Maranda took part in a two month long inpatient treatment program for depression and anxiety. This is a great little zine for all those who can relate and all those curious. Email Maranda for more of their writings. Contact: shoolofmaps@gmail.com.



quarter letter, 22 pgs



## Filling the Void

Interviews about quitting drinking & using

This zine is for people who are trying to quit drinking/using and for folks who want to be supportive to folks who want to or are trying to quit. Cindy Crabb is at it again, this time on the topic of addiction. Cindy and her sister interview some folks who all had different drinking/using styles and have found ways to make quitting work for them. Cindy made this zine because on her own path she found that a zine like this was needed.

half legal, 56 pgs AA location: Mental Wellness







Spring is coming, are you ready?

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